

Christian Consolations
Taught from
FIVE HEADS
IN
RELIGION.

- I. Faith. } } III. The Holy Spirit.
II. Hope. } } IV. Prayer.
V. The Sacraments.

Written by a Learned PRELATE.

Jeremy Taylor

Isaiah 40. 1, 2.

*Comfort ye, comfort ye my people,
saith your God:*

*Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem,
and cry unto her, that her warfare
is accomplished, that her iniquity
is pardoned —*

L O N D O N,

Printed for R. Royston, Bookseller to his
most Excellent Majesty, 1671.

Rob: Gould, Ed; 9th fl: (71.)

FIVE HEADS
IN
RELIGION

I. Psalm 52 III. The Holy Spirit
II. Luke 22 IV. Prayer
V. The Sacrament

Written by a Learned Prelate

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Printed by J. Gould, London 1671

Gen. Res. 28 Oct 38 Gen. Res.

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TO THE
R E A D E R.

THIS *Manual of Christian Consolations derived from Five Heads of great importance in Religion, was written by a late R. Prelate of our Church, and is now Printed according to his own Copy.*

The Papers were presented by him to a Person of Honour, for whose private use they were designed: But, as the Noblest Spirits are most communicative, that Noble and Religious Lady was pleased to impart them for the good also of others.

A 2

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Gen. Res. 28 Oct 38 George

To the Reader.

*We read in the Evangelists how that the Holy Jesus, who went about doing good (that's the short, but full, Character which * Saint*

* Acts
10.38.

Peter gives of him) did by a Miracle of Mercy bless five Loaves to the feeding of a very great multitude. And may the same Almighty Goodness bless and prosper whatsoever Spiritual good is contained in these Five Helps and Directions for a Christian's Comfort, to the refreshing and strengthening of such Souls as truly hunger and thirst after God. May the serious and devout Readers taste and see how good the Lord is, that his Lovingkindness is better than Life, and that the Light of his Countenance, the sense of his favour, is infinitely more Heart-cheering, and brings with it a

Psal.4.

*truer and larger satisfaction than the encrease of Corn,
and*

To the Reader.

and Wine, and Oil doth to the men of this world, who only or chiefly mind Earthly things, and unwisely place their felicity in the fading and empty enjoyments of this present life.

It is good then that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the Salvation of the Lord; for *Lam. 3.* he is good to them that wait for him, to the Soul that seeketh him. *He who is the God of Love, and even * Love it self; * 1 Jo. 4.* He who is the ever-flowing Fountain of Goodness, will not fail to fill the hungry with good things. Such a Christian hath meat to eat which the world knows not of; he feeds on the hidden Manna: he hath (as S. Austin said of S. Ambrose) *occultum os in corde ejus, and with this he doth sapida gaudia de pane Dei ruminare.*

To the Reader.

*The Father of the World, who
openeth his hand, and sa-
tisfieth the desire of every
living thing, giving to all
their meat in due season; he is as
ready to fulfil the desire of them
that fear him; he will give*

*Pfal. 84. grace and glory, and no
good thing will he withhold
from them that walk uprightly.*

*And here from the character and qua-
lification of the Persons [them that
fear him, and them that walk up-
rightly] it highly concerns us to ob-
serve and to lay it to heart, That a
Sincere desire and Serious endeavour
to fear God and walk uprightly is
a necessary and indispensible Condi-
tion to qualifie and make us meet for
the receiving of the best of Divine fa-
vours and blessings. We must first
walk in the fear of the Lord, if we
would walk in the Comfort of the
Holy*

To the Reader.

Holy Ghost; as these two are set together in Acts 9. 31. If we would have the Spirit to be our Comforter, we must follow the Spirit as our Guide and Counsellor. If we would find rest unto our Souls, we must take Christ's yoke Matth. 11. upon us, the yoke of his Precepts, which are all holy, and just, and good. A State of inward Comfort and true Tranquillity of Spirit can never be secured and preserved, but by a continued care to walk before God in a faithful obedience to his Will in all things.

For there is no peace to the wicked; as is * twice exprest by the noble Prophet Isaiah; But Great peace have they that love thy Law, saith the Royal Psalmist, the man after God's own heart, Psalm 119. 165. wherein

* Chap. 48. 22.
Chap. 57. 21.

To the Reader.

herein spake his own experience; and
Psal. 37. elsewhere, Mark the perfect
37. man, and behold the up-
right, for the end of that
man is peace. While he lives, he
lives in peace, his Soul dwells at
ease; he feels an unspeakable joy and
pleasure within, upon the sense of his
doing his duty, and being faithful in
obedience to his Lord and Master in
Heaven. And when he dies, he de-
parts in peace, and shall

* Isa. 57.

|| Mat. 25.

* enter into peace, and
|| into the joy of his Lord.

Here he tastes how sweet the Lord is,
but there he shall be abun-
Psal. 37. dantly satisfied with the
plenty of God's House, and
made to drink of the River of his
pleasures. The meek shall eat and
be satisfied; and their
Psal. 22. heart shall live for ever.

And so full and compleat
shall be their joy and satisfaction,
that

To the Reader.

that they shall neither hunger nor thirst any more ; for the Lamb shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living Fountains of waters ; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes. This is the happy Portion of those souls, who have the Lord for their God, with whom there is fulness of joy, and at whose right hand there are pleasures most pure and permanent for evermore.

Rev. 7.



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Christian



*Christian Consolations taught
from five Heads in Re-
ligion.*

Our Saviour and his Apostles
**THE
INTRODUCTION.**

THE work of the Ministry
consists in two things; in
Threatnings or Comforts:
The first is useful for the greatest
part of Christians, who are led by
the Spirit of bondage, and fear to
do evil, because of wrath to come;
which grows out of love to them-
selves. The second is fit for the
best Christians, that are led by the
B Spirit

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Spirit of love ; who endeavour to do righteousness, because they love righteousness, and to be like unto God, who, they know, is only good (which grows out of the spirit of adoption) and obey as sons and daughters, and not as servants.

Our Saviour and his Apostles insist sometimes upon the former way, threatening the impenitent, yet qualifying it with tidings of peace, if they return and amend their lives. For *sharpness* must be applied, *according to the power which the Lord hath given for edification, and not for destruction,* 2 Cor. 13. 10. The same Apostle propounds both in the former Epistle, Chap. 4. Verse 21. *shall I come unto you with a rod ? or in love, and in the spirit of meekness ? Which latter is most suitable to the*

The Introduction.

the Gospel, to proclaim peace on earth, and good will towards men. And when James and John would have had fire to come down from Heaven upon the Samaritans, Christ reproved them, saying, *The Son of man is not come to destroy mens lives, but to save them,* Luke 9. 56. and St. Paul, 1 Thess. 5. 9. *God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ.*

And surely there is cause to apply a cluster of consolation against a few grains of terror; 1. Because we are all concluded under sin, and the guilt is ever present unto us. 2. Because of the weakness of the Graces that are in us: not that they are weak, but that humane corruption is mixt with them. 3. Because of the strength and manifoldness of temptations. 4. Because we are to be

The Introduction.

exercised with the sufferance of the Cross, and we are infirm to bear it. Lastly, Because little is communicated to us at the present of that Reward we look for; least of all is any share of it present and before our eyes. Forasmuch then as there are so many in-draughts that break into our heart, to make us sick of sorrow and fear, let us seek comfort from God, who hath left no disease without a remedy to cure it, *who healeth all thy diseases, Psalm 103. 3.* I say it is to be sought from God, lest we light upon them that *tell false dreams, and comfort in vain, Zach. 10. 2.* The right place for it must be the Word of God; as it is *Rom. 15. 4. That we through patience, and comfort of the Scripture might have hope.* Which comfort scatter'd up and down in that Holy Book, and not cast all into a lump together, by search-

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searching it diligently, we may draw our Consolation out of five things, *Faith, Hope, The in-dwelling of the Spirit, Prayer, and the Sacraments.*

B 3

CHAP.







CHAP. I.

That Faith is the Ground and Foundation of a Christian's Comfort. Several doubts and scruples about believing, answered.

FAITH is the Root of all blessings. Believe, and you shall be saved: Believe, and you must needs be sanctified: Believe, and you cannot chuse but be comforted: Believe that God is true in all his promises, and you are the seed of faithful *Abraham*, and shall inherit the promises made to *Abraham*. Believe that you are Christs, and Christ is yours; and

2 *How Faith is the Foundation*

then you are sure that none can perish, whom the Father hath given to him. *There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus,* Rom. 8. 1. And as *Martha* said, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died, Jo. 11. 21. So let all say that groan, and pine away in sorrow, Lord, if thou hadst been here, if thou hadst appeared to my soul in thy goodness, I had not fainted in my trouble. *Isaiah* foretells, Chap. 61. 3. that it should be Christs office to give the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness. : For St. *John* saw in the spirit, that they that follow Christ, are cloathed in white garments, in garments of joy, in the livery of gladness. *Salomon* describing the provident Mistress of a Family, Prov. 31. 21. says, *She is not afraid of the snow for her household, for all her*

her household are clothed with scar-
let: So the household of Christ are
not afraid of frost and snow, nor of
any bitter blast, they have put on
the garment of dependence on
Christ, which protects them, and
do resolve never to put off their
privy-coat of confidence in their
Saviour. With this did Christ en-
courage the poor woman, being
under confusion, who had secretly
toucht the hem of his garment, *Be
of comfort, thy Faith hath made thee
whole, Matth. 9. 22.*

The first time that the word
[*Comfort*] is found in Scripture,
is Gen. 5. 29. upon the birth of No-
ah; his Father says, *This son shall
Comfort us*: so when God did give
Christ to be made man, he did as it
were say unto us, *This Son shall
Comfort you, for his name is Jesus,
and he shall save his people from their*

4 How Faith is the Foundation

first. He that gave us him, hath given us all things with him. As it is true to say, that *Matthew* left all to follow Christ, so it is as true, that he got all that can be wisht by following him.

It is the *Chymistry* of Faith (let me use that word) to turn all things into good and precious Ore. It is *Abraham's* Country in a strange land : *Jacob's* wages when *Laban* defrauded him : *Moses's* honour, when he refused to be the son in law of *Pharaoh's* daughter : *Rahab's* security, when all *Jericho* beside did perish : *David's* rescue, when there was but a step between him and death : The power of the Apostles to be able to cast out Devils : *Mary Magdalen's* sweet ointment to take away the ill savour of her sins. Plead therefore with the Oratory of Faith, and say, Lord,

“ I

“I have no life but in thee, I have
 “no joy but in thee, no salvation
 “but in thee : but I have all these
 “in thee; and then how can my
 “Soul refuse to be Comforted?

But some will say perhaps, *Faith*
 is a powerful Comforter : but I,
 poor wretch, had need to be Com-
 forted concerning my *Faith*. I
 find the pulse of it weak, and some-
 times it intermits, as if it beat not
 at all. Methinks I am not drawn
 near to Christ, or that I am so far
 off, that I cannot embrace him.
 Some such infirmity may seem to
 have been in the *Thessalonians* ; and
 therefore St. Paul says, *I have sent*
Timotheus to establish you, and to
comfort you concerning your Faith,
 1 Epist. Chap. 3. Ver. 2.

Now to turn this water into
 wine, and the trembling of this Ob-
 jection

¶ How Faith is the Foundation

jection into peace and joy in the Holy Ghost, conceive as if these questions were put to you ; Do you often accuse your self of a weak Faith in secret unto God ? I like it for a good symptome ; for an hypocrite doth not use to accuse himself. And do you bewail your want to the Lord, because you would have it better supplied ? that's a good sign too, for it is the same as to thirst for the living God. They that have not the gift of Faith, do not miss it : but they that have it, though but in a little, do insatiably desire the increase of it.

But do you find that the more you put forward to come to Christ, the more you are put back by doubts and temptations ? It is right the resemblance of him that was sick of the pallee, *Mark 2. 4.* faine
he

he would have been brought to Christ, but could not come at him for the press. This press that stops you, are the snares of the world, vain imaginations, nay, perhaps humility, a broken heart, and a tender conscience. Yet find out a way to come to your Saviour, though the throng be cumberfom. If there be no other way, untile the house, break down the roof to be brought into him: call unto the Lord to dissolve this house of clay, that thy Soul may see him clearly without all impediment.

But, at the worst of all, do you lie in a swoon as it were? do you think there is no life, no motion in your *Faith*? do you fear the light of grace is so eclipsed, that you have lost all communion with Christ? Remember, and be assured, that you could not miss Christ
so

8 *How Faith is the Foundation*

so much, unless Christ were in you. Because God loves you, he seems to leave you ; and withdraws out of the way for a time, because he would be found ; and makes you desire to seek him, that you may hold him the surer to you when you enjoy him.

A mother that hath conceiv'd, may think not long after, that she perceives some tokens of her conception ; in a while she doubts of it again, and wisheth some signs of better satisfaction : she hangs long under many assays of fear and perswasion : at last she finds the babe spring in her womb, and is utterly confirm'd. So it is with them in whom Christ is born anew, they have found the Lord, yet sometime, as it is in the Canticles, *He is behind the lattice*, that we miss him with a spiritual jealousye,
and

and fall into many of these fits, as if he were quite departed. And in this state of trepidation we must be exercised, that we may know, that holy fear and a troubled spirit are heavenly qualities that may consist with *Faith*.

Yet I have more to ask. Do you look dejectedly upon your *Faith*, because you apprehend it is not full of life in the root, nor laden with fruit in Godly practice? Wo be to them that are not sensible of those infirmities. It is one of the best lessons in the New Testament, 2 Tim. 2. 1. *Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus*; but it is one of the hardest. God gives a measure of *Faith* to all in the Covenant that call upon him; but we have this gift in earthen vessels, and taint it with the affections of our carnal mind. The best *Faith*
is

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is weak, wavering, short-sighted, fickle and falls like a tune in music. Therefore to encourage a perplexed mind, hearken to *Isaiah, Chap. 35. 4. say to them that are of a sorrowful heart, be strong, fear not.* For though it be but an Infant-faith, it is a true Faith : as an Infant is a true man in the essence of a man, though not a man in growth ; perfect in the real being, though not in the degrees, wherein we must strive to grow up more and more. To prove the truth of it, believe all the Word of God, and it can be no wider : and for the soundness of it, believe in Christ, and look for salvation in him alone, then it is as legitimate and true born, as is the Faith of any Saint that is far more noble. A dim, or a blear-eye, that lookt upon the brazen Serpent, did procure a remedy for a wound, as much as a clear

of a Christian's Comfort. 11

clear and well-condition'd Eye. And a little Faith, casting its weak beams upon Christ and his death, will go far. The quantity of a grain of Mustard-seed hath warmth and vertue in it to spread abundantly. If any Faith on earth had shaken off all frailty, and comprehended the joys of Heaven, without casting its eye aside to the love of this world, I do not conceive how the body could subsist any longer here, but that the Soul in that extasie would be dissolved and fly away.

Lastly, as God sees such sins in you, as you cannot see, so he sees such Graces in you as you cannot perceive. The charitable, to whom Christ speaks when they are at his right hand, *Matth. 25.* do deny such good things to be in them, as Christ did profess they had.

The

12 How Faith is the Foundation, &c.

The *Canaanitish* woman found no better in her self than the vileness of a Dog, that waited for crums under the table, but Christ commends her for her great Faith. The *Centurion*, *Matth.* 8. saw nothing but unworthiness in his person: but Christ gave him the praise above all those to whom he had preacht in *Israel*. Confess then, and be not ashamed to say, Lord I believe, help my unbelief; and take consolation, that water-springs shall flow out of a barren ground, which suspected it self to be parcht and dry. Though you see but little by your own light, it is because it is put into the Lanthorn of humility. And let these be the consolations of Faith.

CHAP.



CHAP. II.

That a Christian's Comfort flows from the Grace of Hope. The object of Hope is, 1. That which is Good. 2. A Good absent. 3. Though absent, yet possible; and that for three Reasons. 4. Though possible, yet difficult. An account of two sorts of difficulties, with particular encouragements against them.

YET know that Faith never rides single, but it carries Hope before it. Faith is the substance of things Hoped for, Heb. 11. 1. No Scripture doth better contain them both in a little than Titus, Chap. 1. Verse 1, 2. The Apostle says, That the Faith
of

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of Gods Elect, first, acknowledgeth the Truth. Secondly, That it is according to Godliness. Thirdly, It is in hope of Eternal life, which God that cannot lye, promised before the world began. When you see a weight of iron tied to a line, wound up on a wheel from the ground to the top of an house, remember it is like the heart of a sinner, leaden and heavy, lying upon the ground, and wound up in this Text with the line of *Hope* to the top of Heaven. Heaven then is the express and fair object of *Hope*, and God in his promise is the procurer. *Promise I say: For we do not grope for Heaven blind-fold; and fall upon it out of our own head without a warrant: but our assurance is incomparably the best that can be given, and in the best manners a Promise made before the world began, that is, freely, unrequested,*
70 when

flows from the Grace of Hope. 15

when we could have no being to ask it: and made over to Christ the Mediator, that it should be put into his hand to perform it to us. And it is unchangeable, as is all the truth of God: for *he cannot lye*, neither is there any shadow of change in him. What can we desire more? Carry this evidence along with you, and shew it to your self upon every disquietness and deep plunge of heart: and how can you chuse but convince your self, that your melancholy and distrust is causeless? *The hope of the righteous shall be gladness*, Prov. 10. 26. And *we rejoyce in hope*, Rom. 12. 12.

The design of *Hope* is consider'd four ways. First, it intends unto that which is *good*, which makes a difference between *Hope* and *Fear*: for we *hope* for that which is *good*,

we

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we fear that which is evil. Secondly, It is not that good which is present, but absent; and this makes a difference between Hope and Fruition. Rom. 8. 24. *Hope that is seen, is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?* Thirdly, Though it be a good absent, and not yet obtained, yet it is possible; which is the difference between Hope and Despair: but we have no colour for despair, since all things are possible to God. Fourthly, It is a possible good, but *bonum arduum*, to be gotten with difficulty and pains: which puts a difference between the diligence of Hope, and careless Security. These are the four promontories of Hope, and a good wind blows from every quarter.

I. First, It is good for a man to Hope, since we hope for that which
is

flows from the Grace of Hope. 17

is good, so good, that it exceeds all that *Eye* hath seen : for as yet we see not God, but in his creatures. Nor *Ear* hath heard it, that is, in its full, unutterable excellency, which the words of Holy Scripture cannot express to our imperfect reason. Then *neither can it enter into the heart of man* : for things can seem no greater than words can utter. *We know as yet but in part, hereafter we shall know as we are known.* If we have boasted to the Heathen that we look for a Kingdom and a Crown of glory, we are sure we shall not be *ashamed* of that hope, *Rom. 5. 5.* We may be ashamed that we have doted upon petty things, out of which we have devised felicity, and they have failed, and deceived us : but our treasure laid up in the Heaven is so sure, that in the end, and in the day of trial none shall insult over
our

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our hope, and say where is now the Lord your God? If a mortal man detain the wages of the labourer, 'tis a sin: Therefore it cannot be incident to God, *who is not unrighteous to forget our work, and labour of love, Heb. 6. 10. We shall not always be forgotten: our Expectation shall not perish for ever, Psal. 9. 18.* The judgment of a good eye-sight is to see afar off; so is the judgment of a good hope to remark the unspeakable reward of a better age to come. Whereupon it hath sufficient satisfaction and content to leave, or to lose all it hath, *things not worthy to be compared to the glory which is revealed in us, Rom. 8. 18.* The rich Mines and Golden trade of both the *Indies* are on the other side the Line: so the rich trade of *Hope* is in the other world. Change your poor freight, which is your lading in this vessel
of

flows from the Grace of Hope. 19
of clay, and barter it for an immortal possession.

Hope that is not under the embers, but mounts up in a trembling flame, reckons not what it is worth by a very little which it hath in hand, but by its share which is reserved in the store-house of God's eternal recompence. Now I am abased, but there is mine honour, a far abundant exceeding weight of glory. Now I carry about a crazy sickly body, there it shall be immortal, and incident to no distemper. Now my neighbours and acquaintance despise me, and run far from me; there I shall be enrolled with Angels and Saints, and with the Church of the first born, and with the Spirits of just men made perfect, *Heb. 12. 23.* Now I live in all disorder of Church-ordinances, in distraction of Schisms, in the
C filthy

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filthy stanch of old and new heresies: but there is the new *Jerusalem*, where all things set forth the glory of the Lamb in beauty, and holiness, and truth. Now I must die, and deliver up my body unto the dust; but Christ died and rose the third day, and will bring again with him in due time all those that sleep: and *comfort one another with these words*, saith St. Paul, *1 Thess.* 4. 14. And as when Christ ascended into Heaven, *He went up with a merry noise, and the Lord with the sound of the trumpet, Psal. 47. 5.* So let every heart break out into praise and gladness, whose hope flies up unto the Lord in his holy places: *Holding fast the confidence, and the rejoycing of hope firm unto the end, Heb. 3. 6.*

II. Stay yet, and consider it is a good which is *absent* that we hope for:

flows from the Grace of Hope. 21

for : When it is come and brought to pass, *Hope* is at the journeys end. Say to the righteous, it shall be well with him, for they shall eat the fruit of their doings, Isa. 3. 10. It shall be well, *Dixit erit*. It is not paid down, as we say, in ready money, but we have a good bond for assurance.

Let me object upon this, Doth not *Hope* deferr'd afflict the Soul? Yet be not disheartened : it is better than so. For first we have somewhat in hand ; because that which *Faith* lays hold of, is really and actually its own : now *Hope* is *Faith's* rent-gatherer, and takes up that which *Faith* claims upon the bargain which Christ hath made for us.

To be clearer yet : *Eph. 1. verses 13, 14. We are sealed with the holy spirit*

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Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance. You see then, that though we have not the *inheritance* as yet, we have the *earnest* of it ; and an earnest-penny is more than nothing. Here I must distinguish between a *pledge* and an *earnest*. A *pledge* is laid down for assurance to repay that which was lent : but an *earnest* is given upon a bargain, to keep that till the rest be brought in. Now the *earnest* that we receive of the Kingdom to come, is the *seal of the Spirit*, an imprinted comfort that it shall be ours: A seal that cannot be defaced, a comfort that cannot be taken from us. So much as you have of that *seal*, so much you have of the *earnest* : therefore you cannot say that *Hope* hath quite nothing to stay its longing. The blossoms of the Spring do not only promise, but are God's earnest, to represent the
fruits

flows from the Grace of Hope. 23
fruits which will wax ripe in Autumn.

I will make it out in another similitude. He that is in a Merchants ware-house, where spices are stored up, shall have some taste of them in his palate by their strong scent, though he put not one corn into his mouth: so we taste Heaven, because the Spirit that comes from Heaven dwells in us, and gives many delightful signs of a glorified reversion.

But to go forward; it may not be denied but that *Hope* is anxious, and restless till it come to enjoy. How tedious a thing it is to stay long without the company of them, whom we entirely love? And can it be otherwise than irksom, to be so long absent from the vision of God, and of Christ compassed with

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innumerable Angels? St. Paul says no less, *Rom. 8. 23. We, that have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan within our selves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of the body.* Here are groans and sighs indeed; but we shall never be Sea-sick with that easie tossing, having *Hope as an anchor of our Soul, Heb. 6. 19. Hope of the right stamp looking for the appearance of God, and the reward that he brings with him, hath a good Mate that goes together with it, and that's Patience.* In the saddest book of the Scripture, *Lamen. 3. 26.* it is written, *It is good that a man should hope, and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord.* Which that it may not be wanting, we must contend for it in prayer, as it is *2 Thess. 3. 5. The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and the patient waiting for Christ.* And it
is

flows from the Grace of Hope. 25

is no difficult thing to be perswaded. For when we are held off for a while from the inheritance of Heaven, do we not attend God's leisure? and will the handmaid wait for her Mistress, being in some degrees of place above her; and shall not the Creature stay the leisure of the Creator so infinite above us? Beside, the patient expectation of the recompence will increase the recompence, and make it more superlative: therefore *let not him that believes, make haste, Isa. 28. 16.* Nay, so your Spirit will be patient, the Lord will allow you your importunity to call upon him to hasten; *My Strength, haste thee to help me, Psal. 22. 19.* Finally, stay for that contentedly, which when it comes, it comes but once, and shall abide for ever.

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III. Another degree upon which *Hope* steps higher is this, that her aim is *possible*. I have said how that which is proposed to it is *good* : that it is not disconsolate, though it be in futuration, and not yet obtain'd ; (for it is too good to be yet obtained) if patience have its perfect work, it can attend cheerfully. *My soul wait thou only upon God, for my expectation is from him, Psal. 62. 5.* Strike we therefore pleasantly upon this third string, that the past object of divine Hope is to be accomplished. *For I run not as uncertainly, I fight not as one that beateth the air, I Cor. 9. 26.* Paul did do all things, and suffer all things, for that which is seizable, and might be atchieved.

The covetous is a projector for so much wealth, as can never be gotten.

flows from the Grace of Hope. 27

gotten. The Epicure longs for so much pleasure, as can never be enjoy'd. Great Clerks and Philosophers seek for so much knowledge, as can never be found : which in *Isaiahs* words, is *to spend money for that which is not bread, and to labour for that which doth not satisfie,* Chap. 55. 2. This is able to break the brain, and to break the heart : for there is no labour to lost labour. *But the fruit of the righteous is a tree of life,* Prov. II. 30. His *Hope* stands upon a sound bottom : it is all comfort for three Reasons. First it is possible, because it comes from an Infinite power. 2. Because it is derived from Infinite love and goodness. 3. It hath abundant satisfaction from long and constant experience : and what can we desire more ?

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1. The first pillar that props it up is the Almightyness of God. *Abba Father, all things are possible to thee,* says our Saviour, *Mark 14. 16.* Talk not to me how the Seas should be turned into dry Land, or how the poor can be raised up to be set with the Princes of the people: or how stones can be raised up to be children of *Abraham*: or how palsies and fevers can be cured with a word. I will stop all gaps of infidelity with this one bush, *That God is able to do it.* He that is made by no Cause, cannot be confined in his Being: and he that hath no bounds in his Being, can have no bounds and restriction in his Power. And if any fancy start out of our weak brain, to cavil that somewhat is impossible to God, it is soberly spoken by one, that it were better to say that this
could

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could not be done, than that God could not do it. There is no possibility therefore for Christian Hope to despair, because all things are possible to God. There is no Horizon under Heaven, or above Heaven, that Hope cannot look beyond it. For that comfort, that is commensurable with the strength and power of God, is as large as can be contained in the heart of a creature.

But if you lean upon the help of men, and hosts, and Angels, they are slender reeds, and will give you a fall: as God said of the vain trust of the Jews, *They shall be ashamed of Ethiopia their expectation, Isa. 20. 5.* How many do I see to sink under a little sorrow, because they have too much temporal comfort? the world is too liberal to them: it hath given them of all things

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things so largely, that they have not the patience to want any thing. As God told *Gideon*, that he had too much of Man in his Army to depend upon the Almighty for victory, and he bad him retain but the thirtieth part, and his foes should flye before him, *Jud. 7. 4.* Throw all the miserable comforts of the world out of doors for rubbish, and cast your self upon the strength of God, and upon that alone, and then say, Lord receive me, for I have driven all other solace from me, that I might enjoy thee alone: now I am ready for my Saviour, for there is none to help me, but only thou O Lord.

2. Secondly, That which holy *Hope* hath in its prospect is possible, not only for the Infiniteness of power, but for the Infiniteness of the mercy of our God. 'Tis easie to
get

flows from the Grace of Hope. 31

get the favour of a gracious and a gentle nature among the sons and daughters of men : and the most generous are the most reconcilable. Then what possibility, nay what readiness will *Hope* find to be reconciled to God, *merciful, gracious, long-suffering, abundant in goodness and truth?* *Exod. 34. 6.* The Devil is not more frequent, nor more strong in any temptation, than to undermine *Hope* in this point, that it is too forward, and too peremptory to expect remission of sins : fain he would have a tender Conscience stick in this mire, and never get out of it. Some Reverend writers go so far to teach, that Satan himself at first, when he began his mischief in Paradise, was of opinion, that sin could not be forgiven, it being his own case : and that he would never have tempted *Eve* to disobedience, if he had imagin'd

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gin'd the eating of the forbidden fruit could be pardoned; not suspecting that God would have given his only Son to die for our redemption. Which I pass by, because it depends upon a grave question, whether God could pardon sin by his absolute power, without satisfaction made to his Justice? Deep disputings will yield but shallow comforts: Of this we are assured, that the means which the Father appointed are excellent (into which, *1 Pet. I. the Angels desire to look*) to give us redemption and forgiveness of sins through the blood of Christ, according to the riches of his grace; *Eph. I. 7. We have trespassed against our God, but there is hope concerning this thing, Ezra 10. 2. Forgiveness of sins is put into our Creed: he that doth not believe it, hath no Creed nor Christianity in him. Do you believe a Catholick Church?*

flows from the Grace of Hope. 33

Church? that's the dowry of that Church, which Christ espoused to him in his blood. Do you believe *a Communion of Saints?* this is it in which we are baptized, in which all our communion doth joyn, *That through Christ is preached forgiveness of sins, and by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which we could not be justified by the law of Moses, Acts 13. verses 38, 39.* So also it is put into our prayer, as well as into our Creed. And he that taught us to pray, *Forgive us our sins,* hath taught us this comfort, that sins are pardonable.

Yet an afflicted Conscience will receive suggestion, that some sins indeed are pardonable, but not all, not the sin of the evil Angels, not the sin against the Holy Ghost: and *there is a sin unto death, I do not say ye should pray for it,* says St. John,
I Ep.

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1 Ep. 5. 16. These verily are set out for instances of irreverfible judgment, to deter us from committing crimes of a vaſt magnitude. But mark, the Holy Scriptures have not unfolded it clearly and explicitly, wherein the hainouſneſs of theſe ſins did conſiſt, that we may not accuſe our ſelves of them, and fall into deſpair, as if we had committed them. Since you know not expreſſly what theſe are, how can you lay them to your own charge? Nay, if you lay them to your own charge, you muſt be miſtaken: for he that condemns himſelf, ſhall not be condemned of the Lord. Such incurable caſt-aways have their Conſciences ſeared, and are not ſenſible of their guilt. Whomore like to be of that number than the *Phariſees*, who juſtified themſelves, ſaying, Are we alſo blind?

Well,

Well, says a forlorn sinner, my sins then are not the fore-named, nor out of possibility of mercy; but it is almost as bad, that they are in an unlikelihood to mercy; for they are very hainous. As unto that confession that your trespasses are very hainous, conceive so of them, and spare not: true repentance thinks no sin to be a little one. So *St. Hierom* spake to the commendation of the *Lady Paula* in her Funeral Sermon, that she was wont to bewail every fault she had committed, as if it were one of the most presumptuous crimes. But be it so really, that God hath let you incur no small delinquencies: as *Aaron* was not free from idolatry, nor *David* from adultery, nor *Peter* from abjuration of Christ, nor *Paul* from persecuting the Church, nor *Manasses* from witchcraft,

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craft, nor *Mary Magdalen* from indefinite scandal, well, I know not what; who yet all obtained mercy, for a pattern to them who hereafter should believe in Christ to everlasting life, *1 Tim. 1. 18.* They were called *Novatians*, who blotted out the beginning of the Eighth Chapter of *St. John's Gospel*, because the story tells us, that Christ dismiss the woman taken in adultery with a gracious gentleness. Why should not his procedure in judgment be like his doctrine? did he not preach that Publicans and Harlots should go into Heaven before proud Justiciaries? *Be merciful unto my sin, for it is great,* says *David, Psalm 25. 11.* This is not the way to deal with mortal Judges, when we stand at their bar; but this is the way to obtain propitiation from our God; Heal me, for I am sore wounded; cure
me,

flows from the Grace of Hope. 37

me, for I am very sick ; be merciful to my sin, for it is very great. *Zozimus* a Pagan that envied the honour of *Constantine* the Great, makes this tale to discredit him in his History ; that *Constantine* had put his wife *Fausta*, and his son *Crispus* to death : after which being haunted with an ill Conscience that gave him no quiet, he sought among the Heathen Priests for expiation, and they could give him no peace : but he was told that the Religion of Christians was so audacious, as to promise pardon to all sins, were they never so horrible. Is not this to commend the Emperor and his Religion under the form of a dispraise ? for what rest could a troubled mind attain to, from the Rites and Superstitions of Idol-gods ? But in the immense value of the price of the blood of Christ there is redemption for every sinner,

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ner, that repents and believes. *Whatsoever ye loose on Earth, shall be loosed in Heaven*, says Christ to his Apostles, *Matth. 18. 18.* O loſe not a ſyllable of ſuch comfort in this diſcomfortable world. *Quodcunque* is all manner of ſin, great and little. And if Chriſt hath given ſuch commiſſion to men on Earth, to unloose every ſin by the power of their office, and the word of conſolation, then how unbounded is his own clemency? No ſins can ſuper-abound his grace, if we do not ſin preſumptuouſly, becauſe grace abounds.

Yet the poor *Publican* will beat his breaſt, and cry out dolefully, My ſins are many, they are more in number than the hairs of my head. The bill of endictment is a true bill: who can tell how oft he offendeth? Scarce any ſin we act
but

flows from the Grace of Hope. 39

but hath a nest of sins in it: then think we what a heap will they make, when they are put all together? *Peter*, it seems, misdoubted, that if a man were forgiven, that had trespass often, it would be scandalous, and encourage the offender, therefore he thought it fit to stint indulgence to some mediocrity, as it is, *Matth.* 18. 21. *Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? until seven times?* *Jesus answereth, I say not unto thee, Until seven times, but, until seventy times seven times:* so that Christ commends a boundless forgiveness in a finite number for an infinite. And doubtless himself would not stick with us for the same number. God forbid we should think he taught to be more merciful, or of greater perfection than himself. *Her sins which are many, are forgiven, Luke 7. 47.*

Be

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Be thankful and admire the mercies of our Father, both for nailing our great sins to the Cross of Christ, and for acquitting us from the innumerable fry of Minim-sins, those of daily incursion; because when one of the least is remitted, all are remitted together. Mark that considerately. One that committed some foul and leprous sin, goes mourning upon the deep sense of it, and especially the horror of it makes him fear damnation: yet he greatly deceives himself, if he think his other sins are past over, and this great one, or a few such do remain to his perdition. For do you hope comfortably that some faults of omission, some idle words, some garish and customary fashion of pride are remitted to you? with the same affiance, leaning on Christ, you may hope that you are discharged

flows from the Grace of Hope. 41

charged from your greatest enormities. For all unrighteousness is covered at once to them with whom God is well pleased. No sin is forgiven to him that is not in Christ, and against him that is in Christ there is no condemnation. They are the sons of God, to whom the Lord doth graciously remit any fault : but where any fault is not remitted, they are his enemies. He that is justified from any sin, must be truly penitent : but a true penitent is sorry for all sins together ; hates them, eschews them all alike. Then follows a plenary absolution from all iniquity through Christ our Lord.

And beware that you over-look not these multitudes of sins of the under size, as if little grief or anxiety would serve for them : are they not numberless corns of sand ? and
may

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may not a weight of too much sand sink a ship, as soon as a burden of too much iron? The dailiness of sin must be bewailed with the dailiness of sorrow. And then *when thou liest down, thou shalt not be afraid, yea thou shalt lie down, and thy sleep shall be sweet, Prov. 3. 24.* Now tell me if this balm be not enough to heal the bleedings and bruising of despair? Talents of sin, and sins in small mony, you may hide them all in the wounds of Christ. It is possible for God to do the benefit, and possible for thee to receive it. *Let Israel hope in the Lord: for with the Lord there is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption; and he shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities, Psalm 130. verse ult.*

3. It must now be added, how that which *Hope* waits for is possible, since

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since it may find satisfaction from long and constant experience. In the yonger days of the world somewhat might be said to excuse the backwardness of Hope: they wanted proof and demonstration in those times. Even *Cain* was the sooner overtaken with despair, crying out, *My sin is greater than can be forgiven me*: He had not lived so long to be taught the contrary by experience. But every age hath given advantage to Hope to be satisfied better and better. O God, we have heard with our ears, and our fathers have declared unto us the noble works that thou didst in their days, and in the old time before them, *Psalms 44. 1.* The records of God do tell us how the Armies of aliens have been discomfited before his Children, how the rocks have given them drink, and the barren wilderness bread; how the Church

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hath been scattered and recollected: the righteous continually supported either with deliverance or patience: that the dead have been raised up to life: nay, that *Enoch* and *Elias* were taken up alive into Heaven, to implant into our minds, that both they that are in the graves shall hear the voice of Christ, and come forth; and that such as shall be found living at that day shall be caught up in the clouds, and be translated into Heaven. And I challenge *Hope* to instance, if it can surmise that any thing is impossible to be brought to pass, since there is a president in every thing to demonstrate, that the right hand of the Lord hath brought mighty things to pass. There is one thing, I confess, for which there is no example, neither can be evidenced, till all things be accomplished, that is the coming of the
Lord

flows from the Grace of Hope. 45

Lord Christ with the new Heavens and the new Earth: and yet, to confirm us in that mystery to come, St. *John* did see the Idea or glimpse of it in his Revelation.

The use of all this is to remember the transactions of God in the times that are gone before. Who ever saw the righteous forsaken? or the wicked flourish long? was there ever any persecution of the Church, which hath not ended in its triumph? But stay for it, and pray for it, and condole for the delays of God's providence, till you may say in earnest, *My soul fainteth for thy salvation, Psalm 119. 31.* How easie is it for a Christian, that hath any nostril, to run after God in the odour of his sweet ointments, and trace his steps from point to point? and then to say with *David*, *I have remembered*
D 2 *thy*

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thy judgments of old, O Lord, and have comforted my self, Psalm 119. 52. and from another Prophet, Ezek. 14. 22. Ye shall see their way, and their doings, and shall be comforted concerning all the evil that I have brought upon Jerusalem.

The great store-house of Consolation is *Hope*; therefore all this, and more must be said to keep it fresh, like a green Olive-tree, having never a fear or withered bough upon it. I come now to complete it; I have shewn it aims only at *good*, and that which is only and excellently good: at such a good whose harvest is not brought in all in a year, but still there is more and more to be had, and the most to come: It is possible through the greatness of Gods power and mercy, as all ages have witnessed.

IV. But

IV. But lastly, that which may seem to pinch is, that it is *Bonum arduum*, a good not easily attained, but with great labour and diligence, to give warning against sloth and security. It were not worth our longing to say we hope for petty things, easie, and at hand; but for things of value, for which we must struggle with many lets and impediments to possess them. No man need to hope to find Cockle-shells on the shore: but to find Pearls in the Sea, that's an object for the adventure of a Jeweller. Neither is the Jewel of Christian Hope easily purchast. But as *Elijah* said to *Elisha*, *Thou hast asked a hard thing: nevertheless if thou see me, when I am taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee*, 2 Kings 2. 10. Much after that sort I commune with my heart, and say, It

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is good to seek for eternal life, pursue it as the Hart brayeth after the rivers of waters: there will be much a-do to get it, for *many shall seek to enter in, and shall not be able,* Luke 13. 24. Nevertheless, if thou canst see the Lord, as if he were continually before thee, thou shalt not miss of that thou desirest: for all things are possible to him, whose eyes are ever toward the Lord.

These difficulties upon which I strike, are either *in our selves, or in our adventure*: in our selves partly through natural imbecillity, partly through contracted impotency.

1. Our natural languor is that of original contagion, which makes us so weak, that there is none that doth good, no not one. Which is not to be extenuated, as if the malignity

flows from the Grace of Hope. 49

lignity of it might be suppress'd with a little resistance. It is good to know the power of so strong an enemy, that we may be fortified against it. It is a root of bitterness never to be digg'd up out of corrupt nature: a coal of fire spitting out sparks of temptations continually: as inward to us as the marrow is in our bones. Yet there is hope in Christ to flake this fire, though not utterly in this life to quench it. It is a body of death, a whole body, consisting of all the members of sin; yet a body is but flesh, and a Spirit is mightier than flesh. Apply that of the Prophet *Zachary* to it, as we may read it by the direction of our Margent, and keep to the Original, *Chap. 8. Verse 6. If it be difficult in the eyes of this people, shall it be difficult in mine eyes, saith the Lord?* Therefore since God is our help against the in-

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urrection of this rebellious sin, let us be comforted in his help, and not in excuses. For we must not plead our personal maladies, and natural inclinations, and think that God will take it for an answer, and ask no more.

I am dull of understanding, says one, and what I am taught I cannot bear it away. I am suddenly transported with indignation, and cannot chuse but break out : I am retentive of an injury, and cannot easily be reconciled. All this, and the like is no better than the answer of those ill manner'd guests in the Gospel, which were invited to a Feast made by a King, *We cannot come, I pray you have us excused :* which sounds like confession and humility, but it is denial and defiance. Spend your breath in a better way, and cry out often and affectionately,

flows from the Grace of Hope. 51

tionately, Give me not over to my self O Lord, take away from me my stony heart, and give me an heart of flesh. Drop down upon this barren earth, and it shall bring forth quite against the byass of nature. The high minded will grow meek as a Lamb, the covetous will begin to disperse and scatter abroad, the lying lips will confess the truth, bitter cruelty will melt into pity, new-fangled braveries will be laid aside and blush at vanity. To what purpose are the pourings in of the Spirit, but that what is wickedly in-bred from our conception, should be shaken off from the tree, and a better fruit spring up in the place from the increase of God?

Mark the rain that falls from above, and the same shower, that dropt out of one cloud, increaseth

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sundry plants in a garden, and severally according to the condition of every plant: in one stalk it makes a Rose, in another a Violet, divers in a third, and sweet in all. So the Spirit works its multiform effects in several complexions, and all according to the increase of God. Is thy habit and inclination cholerick? why, try thy self, if thou be very apt to be zealous in a good cause, and it turns thy natural infirmity into holy heat. Is melancholy predominant? the grace of God will turn that sad humor into devotion, prayer, and mortifying thy pleasures to die unto the world. Is thy temperature sanguine and chearful? the goodness of God will allow it unto thee in thy civil life in a good mean; but over and above it will make thee bountiful, easie to pardon injuries, glad of reconciliation,

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flows from the Grace of Hope. 53

on, comfortable to the distressed, always rejoycing in the Lord. Is a man phlegmatick and fearful? if this freezing disease, which is in thee from thy mothers womb, be not absolutely cured, yet the Holy Ghost will work upon it, to make thy Conscience tender, wary, to give no offence, to make thee pitiful, penitent, contrite, ready to weep for thy transgressions. There are two handles to take hold of every thing, says a Heathen: A dissolute man takes hold of original frailties, and makes them Serpents: a holy man declines their Serpentine nature, and catcheth them by that part, which may conduce to all manner of vertue. This is the comfort of *Hope* against original iniquitation, that this great enemy, by the operation of the Spirit, shall be made our friend, or our foot-stool. *O wretched man that I am!*

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am ! who shall deliver me from this body of death ? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord, Rom. 7. 24.

What is stronger than a Lion ? yet, if the Lion be kill'd, *out of the strong comes forth sweetness, Jud. 14. 14.* For all this the worst is not past : beside natural pronity to sin, we have contracted much more evil by custom, education, strong habits, noxious examples, bad enticements and infusions. The Cockatrice-egge was laid, when we were in our mothers womb, but it proves more venomous being hatcht, and grown able to flye abroad. There are seventy sons of *Abab*, who shall kill thee ? Even the sword of the Spirit : *There is none like it*, as *David* said of that of *Goliath*, *1 Sam. 21. 9.* This is sufficient, not merely to cut down grass and briars, but to hew down the tree,

flows from the Grace of Hope. 55

tree, to cut off the branches, to shake the leaves, to scatter the fruit, to fright away the fowls from the branches, and the beasts from grazing under it, *Dan.4. verse 14.* or as the Apostle comforts us in plain words, without a Parable, *I can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth me, Phil.4.13.*

: If you be over-toiled and heated too much, you know how to cool: cast off some garments, wipe away the sweat, sit still and stir not, lest you enflame your self with motion. Follow the same method, lay aside the burden of sin, that enflames you, cast off the weight and the superfluity of naughtiness: bear in mind that Christ sweat drops of blood in his Agony, to make you ashamed of toiling and sweating in Satan's drudgery. Take ease in a Sabbath of holy rest, and moil not
in

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in the unprofitable works of darkness. Try what refrigeration this will give unto your Conscience : else take heed that you be not put to a terrible sweat of fear, lest God take you away in his wrath, and give you up for ever to Satan, whom you have served so willingly.

To the Law, and to the Testimony : mind no examples, but when they are wrapt up therein. *Be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, Rom. 12. 2.* What a case had Noah been in, if he had framed his life by common practice, when all flesh had corrupted their way ? Chuse better company, as *Enoch* did to walk with God, *Gen. 5. 24.* And can two walk together, unless they be agreed ? *Amos 3. v. 3.* It is more than agreement : it imports endearment,

flows from the Grace of Hope. 57

ment, benevolence, friendship with God. No title can be greater, or sweeter: what can match that honour of *Abraham* and the *Apostles*, to be called the *friends* of God, and Christ? No league in the world more sought for, or more willingly accepted: no amity less burdensom, or more beneficial. *St. Austin* 8. *Confess. Cap. 6.* brings in a couple that served the *Roman* Emperor thus debating upon it. What can we look for in this Palace, more than to be call'd the *friends* of our Sovereign? When we have got this, it is no sure and unchangeable favour. And how long shall we attend before we be promoted to it? But let us turn to God in this hour, and sue to be his *friends*, and it shall be done instantly, and remain eternally. *Ask and it shall be given, seek and we shall find.* And as we trespass by
sins

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sin of daily prevention, there is a dailiness of mercy to comfort us. But as you love Christ; and would be beloved, struggle with temptations, do not yield upon the first enticement, no nor upon the second or third assault. *Resist the Devil, and he will fly from you*: quit your self like a man, fight like a Christian: *The flesh is weak, but the spirit is willing, ready, able to assist you, Matth. 26. 41.* Thus Hope waxeth valiant, and assures it self of victory against customs, habits, and all contracted impotencies.

2. Lay now our adventure, the toil and peril of our labour, wherein we are employ'd, in another balance, and more difficulty will appear. For Hope is wise, and doth not flatter it self, as if the Kingdom of Heaven were accessible with little

flows from the Grace of Hope. 59

little pains. What carefulness ought this to work in us? what self-denial? what fear? what zeal? what unblamable conversation? *I run, I fight, I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection, 1 Cor. 9. 27. For Christ Jesus I have suffered the loss of all things, Phil. 3. 8.* Christ, having overcome the sharpness of death, hath opened the kingdom of Heaven to all believers: yet to put us to our skill and labour to follow, mark what he hath taught us, *Matth. 7. 14. Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.*

And therefore is it so *strait and narrow*? a question worthy to be resolved, to teach us, and to comfort us.

First, a very religious life is said
by

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by a Metaphor to go in at a strait gate, because it is our master-piece to find the door, or to begin well; therefore it is call'd *to be born again*. For as to be born into the world needs more art, and skilful Midwifery, than to bring us up: so to be regenerate, to begin to live the life that is in Christ, is exceeding irksom to flesh and bloud: so many are the enticements that throng about the way, to keep us from the door, and to hold us in love with those sins, which have been our companions. As an Orator will be more timorous to deliver the first period of his speech, than all that follows; so we stick long at the first on-set to reform, to be strict, to pass away with so much vanity as must be forsaken. The penitent thief could not find the door till he was going out of the world: *St. Paul*, as some compute,

was

flows from the Grace of Hope. 61

was twenty eight years old before he left to be a blasphemer. But rush on, and make way through all resistances: he that hath one foot over the threshold, and hath cast the world behind him, is well advanced into the courts of our God.

Secondly, A Heavenly mind gathers it self up into one wish, and no more. *One thing have I desired of the Lord, which I will require,* Psal. 27. 4. Grant me thy self, O Lord, and I will ask no more. The new creature asks nothing of God, but to enjoy God: give me this, O Lord, and for the rest let Ziba take all. I will part with all to buy that one Pearl, the riches of Heavenly grace. The servant of sin hath all manner of pleasures under Heaven to trade in. Can he ask for a shop with more variety of ware? why may he not have these,
you

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you will say, and life eternal to boot? Some of them are inconsistent with life eternal; but all are not, so they be added, and not sought for; as our Saviour distinguisheth, *First seek the kingdom of God, and these things shall be added, Matth. 6. 33.* But if you seek them, (which is to love them for themselves) and above the kingdom of God, it is like a man that carries a piece of timber at breadth upon his back; there is no door wide enough for a man to get in with such an impediment upon his shoulders. It is not the gate that excludes him, but he thrusts himself out with his own improvidence.

Thirdly, There are thousands of scandals, millions of errors to be avoided, but truth and holiness are in the middle, in a little compass; and happy is he that shuns extremes,

flows from the Grace of Hope. 63

streams, and falls perpendicularly upon the golden mean. The Commandments of God are but *ten words*, Deut. 4. 13. the inventions of men, and the forms of will-worship are innumerable. *Pray, Fast, give Alms*, Christ comprehends much external duty under those three Heads, but the Traditions of men are more than can be put into a Catalogue. *Call upon God in the time of trouble*, that and no more is the Pole-star of Faith in Prayer; but what a compass doth *Monkishness* take in, to drop beads in the invocation of Angels and Saints? Profaneness neglects the honour of God: Superstition falls into needless excesses about it: the true fear of God is in the centre, as far from the one extream as from the other. As in an accurate Song you must keep Minim-time, or else you will put the whole Quire out; so look that

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that you sing the new song of the Lord with trembling and accurate observation, miss neither Cliff nor Note, that is, neither sound doctrine, nor pious practice.

These are the Reasons why it is so hard to get access to Christ in a narrow way, and through a strait gate. If these difficulties be not discern'd by some, it is because they take up Christianity as it is in use among men, and as they are born to it. But they that came to it in their years of understanding, and were trained up in Church-discipline many years before they were baptized, and all that time were put to exact trial what they would prove, and were taught it over and over, how the Laws of Christ were far stricter than any other Laws in the world; these were preacquainted with the Co-
venant

flows from the Grace of Hope. 65

venant which they must perform, and then received it, with the largest, and hardest conditions. Yet they were brought on with two special comforts: First, that God did behold from Heaven the mightiness of the task which we took upon us, the troubles of persecutions, the dangers of temptations, the infirmities of man to resist them: *He knows whereof we are made, he remembreth we are but dust*: it puts him to admire the performances of his Saints, as *Jesus* marvelled at the *Centurion's Faith*, *Matth. 8. 10.* Secondly, when we are under our hazards, we shall have an answer from the Lord, as *St. Paul* had, *My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness*, *2 Cor. 12. 11.* Therefore as the Lord said of *David* when he had chosen him, *I have laid help upon one that is mighty*,
PSALME
Psalme

66 *How a Christian's Comfort, &c.*

Pſalm 89. 19. So we caſting our ſelves upon the help of God, upon one that is Almighty; though of our ſelves we have gathered little into our Omer, the bleſſing of God upon it will not let us lack. Every hard matter that roſe among the people was to be brought to *Moses*, *Exod. 18. 16.* ſo in every hard cauſe deſire the Lord to plead it, and to judge it; bring it to him, leave it in his Court, and he will end it. Theſe are the Cordials to revive *Hope*, touching the difficulties it finds, in the way to obtain that Good which is ſet before it.

CHAP.



CHAP. III.

How a Christian's Comforts flow from the Inhabitation and Testimony of the Holy Ghost; as also from the Sanctification of the Spirit unto all Obedience, and the fruits of Righteousness.

I Have insisted with so much length, and variety upon *Hope*, because it is the largest in-let of Christian Consolation. Yet in the third place, that which carries it on, nay, that which causeth it, is *the Holy Ghost*. As the Air is the *medium* through which the Eye doth see all things, yet it is the light that shines in it that makes all things visible: so *Hope* is the principal

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cipal means, enlivened by *Faith*, through which we rejoyce with joy unspeakable, and full of glory; yet it is *the Spirit inhabiting* that kindles it, that enlightens it, which makes it affect its object, and cleave unto it. Our Saviour left the world, and ascended into Heaven for many reasons, one was to give gifts unto men; which gifts, though very many, are all united in their Fountain, the Holy Ghost. Of which legacy Christ gave warning before his death, Jo. 14. 16. *I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever.* Verse 17. *The world knows him not, because it sees him not: but ye know him, for he shall dwell with you, and shall be in you.* Verse 18. *I will not leave you comfortless, I will come to you.* Chap. 16. verse 7. *If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you: but*

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but if I depart, I will send him unto you. This Comforter, the everlasting Spirit, to speak after the phrase of men, is the Proxy of Christ, his representative in our hearts. And so it was fulfilled: for when the Spirit descended in great abundance upon the Church, Acts 2. says St. Peter, This is that which is come to pass. Verse 28. Thou hast made known to me the way of life; thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance. And for the evidence of it, it is said, Acts 9.31, The Churches were edified, walking in the fear of God, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost. Which Text begets this note, That Christian solace consists in two things, which we may call the Root and the Fruit. The Root is the Holy Ghost taking up his Tabernacle in us, so that our Body is the Temple of the Holy Ghost which is in us, 1 Cor.

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6. 19. To walk by it in the fear of God is the Fruit of Sanctification in all manner of obedience.

1. Unto the former, *The indwelling of the Spirit*, let this be premised. When we speak of any one dwelling in safety, the great question is, Who keeps the house? When *David* fled from *Jerusalem* for fear of *Absalom*, there was no likelihood that his Palace would hold out, for he left ten women, that were Concubines to keep the House, 2 *Sam.* 15. verse 16. So if we leave our Concubines, our lusts and carnal desires to keep our Conscience, they will betray us to Satan to get the possession. But who can take the City, if the Lord keep it, *Psalms* 127. 1. How impregnable are we, if he dwell in us, and we in him, *because he hath given us of his Spirit*, 1 *Jo.* 4. 13.

ALL

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All that one can say unto this, who is doubtful in Faith, will be, Shew me that the Father of mercies, and that the God of all comfort is entred into me, and it sufficeth. I answer, I cannot shew, that is, demonstrate it to another, that this eternal life is in him; but I can perswade an apt Scholler to stir up the Grace which is in him, that he may shew it to himself. I say he may do it, if he give his mind to it. Else *St. Paul* made a question to no purpose, *Know ye not that ye are the Temples of the Holy Ghost, and that the spirit of God dwelleth in you?* 1 Cor. 3. 16.

I deny not but the Devil hath a way to fetch it about, to make you mis-know, and take no heed of that you do perceive, if he did not stagger you with delusions. This

is the first lesson that he reads out of his Morals, That distrust is a high point of wisdom ; and be not over-reacht with opinion : you are sure of that you see, and of no more. But to meet with this fallacy : Is nothing certain, or at least so certain as that which may be seen ? Why, the Wind will blow away this objection, the Air will confute it. What can you make up so close that the Air and the Wind will not get into it ? Yet you see it not, you know not whence it comes, it is an invisible messenger : *so is every one that is born of the Spirit, Jo. 3. 8.* Breath is an imperceptible expiration, therefore Christ breathed on his Apostles, and said, *Receive ye the Holy Ghost, Jo. 20. 22.* Some gales of Western winds in the Spring make the Earth glad with their gentle blast, and open the Buds
and

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and Flowers: so there is a breath of Omnipotent vertue which fans the heart that was hot in sin with its coolness, which carries away the Caterpillar that eat up the tender leaf of our first greenness: which widens our blossoms to make their expectation shew it self openly: which perfumes the evil scents of scandals that annoy us, as it is express to that intent in the mystical Song, *Cant. 4. 16. Awake thou North wind, and come thou South, and blow upon my Garden, that the spices thereof may flow out.*

I bring the case again to be examin'd: Is no witness so competent to depose for truth, unless it be sensible, and chiefly discerned by the Eye? then what ail all Sects of Philosophers to say, That the Sun, and all the Stars above work upon these Bodies below by heat and
E 4 light,

light, and likewise by influence? An invisible vertue that doth enter into the production of many effects; which seems to have God's approbation with his own voice, *Job 38. 31.* who mentions there *the sweet influences of Pleiades, and the bands of Orion.* And can the Constellations of the Firmament drop down good upon Minerals and Plants, upon Man and Beast, and by a secret derivation? What an error, or rather what a madness is it then, to scruple whether he that made the Heavens can dart Celestial beams into man's Soul, without a sensible perception? And this is all I will say more unto it: Is not the Soul of Man above a material apprehension? *Pliny, or Galen,* or whosoever unadvisedly deny the Immortality of it, will yield there is a Soul in our composition, that holds all the parts of the Body together, and

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and moves, and acts in them: yet they can as soon take a Penfil, and paint an Eccho, as describe the intelligible nature of a Soul, by *species* drawn out in our sensitive fancy. Therefore it concerns us in maintenance of the dignity of our own nature to say, That the Spirit of God can inform our Soul, as well as our Soul can inform our Body. I know not what temptation may rise to gain-say the truth, That the Soul is known by her powers and operations, that it justifies it self to be an Immaterial substance, a spark kindled in us by God, from Reason, and Will, and Memory. But what evidence is there that there is a Divine cause that worketh in, and is more than these natural Faculties?

It is requisite to work close unto this question: and I answer.

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First, because the bounds of nature are known, beyond which nature cannot reach forth it self: as it works in its own sphere to preserve it self in being, and in well-being, in health, in wealth, in fame and glory, in extending our selves unto ages to come by leaving a posterity, in preserving our Country where we are born, and the like. But to have our conversation in Heaven, at this present in Heaven, to ascend thither in our desires, and in the tendencies of all our actions, to aspire to live in blessedness for ever, to long to be at that rest, where there is no sin; to look for a Church which hath neither spot nor wrinkle: this could not enter into us to prosecute it all industriously, constantly, chearfully, but by a supernatural elevation, (far above the vigour of a Soul prest down by a corruptible Body) that
is,

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is, by the power of the Holy Ghost.

Secondly, I feel the pulse of that Divine Spirit beating in me by *delighting in tribulations* for Christs sake, and *taking pleasure in infirmities* upon the same score, 2 Cor. 12.

10. And again, *I am filled with consolation, I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulations*, 2 Cor. 7. 4.

An obstinate Pagan might arm himself with patience and resolution to vex his persecutors, and rather fall into them, than decline them, out of spight and contumacy. But Self-love being spun out of our bowels, bred in the bone; who could rejoyce to endure anguish upon anguish, that God might be glorified, but by strength which we are not born unto, but which is given us, because we are born again of the Spirit.

Go

Go farther yet. How much is the content of a natural man laid aside, when a good Christian in his deliberate thoughts sometimes prays to have the rebellions of his heart kept under by some expedient cross? wisheth for wholsom correction to beat down the rankness of his sins? expects God's fan to winnow the chaff from the wheat? For he knows, that as too much light dazles the Eyes, so too much prosperitie surfeits the mind. Therefore a good practitioner in Repentance perceives, there is no better way to bring him in from his wandrings, than to be scourged home with the gentle hand of God. To which some Expositors say the Spouse alludes, *Cant. 6. 5.* (reading one word as it is right in our Margent) *Turn away thine eyes from me, for they have puffed me up.* If we

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we be puffed up, it is time to pray that the eye of Gods outward mercy be for a little turned from us. But where had nature learnt that Lesson, if the Holy Ghost had never taught it.

Thirdly, As the Apostle says, *No man hates his own flesh.* Every man, not overcome with a phrenzy of melancholy, loves his own being, and would preserve his life. The Devil, that cannot die, knows how loth we are to die: *All that a man hath will he give for his life,* Job 2. 4. But how many Saints have undergone, how many more are willing to undergo the fiery trial, and offer up their bodies for the testimony of the Lord *Jesus*? not to be cried up in popularity: not to be enrolled in the fame of an History, as there was such a sprinkling among the Heathen. But they
have

have died like Lambs in the midst of Wolves, when they have been hated, and evil spoken of in excess, because they would die for the truth of the Gospel, which their persecutors accounted to be blasphemy against the Gods which they worshipped. If Parents, or Wives, or Children hung upon their arms, and besought them with tears to spare themselves, they threw them off as Christ did Peter, *Get thee behind me, Satan, thou art an offence unto me, Matth. 16. verse 22.* To see a Martyr at the point of death feel no horror in his fleshly nature, but to be raised up as high as the third Heavens with zeal; what humane power could bring him to it? nothing but the Holy Ghost did, as I may say, lure his Soul out of the Body, with a bait of a Crown of Glory.

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Fourthly, *The fruits of the Spirit are love, joy, peace, goodness, faith, temperance, &c. Gal. 5. 22.* Is not the Tree known by the fruit? Such a cluster hanging all together, growing constantly, and being fair and sound (*Tota, in toto tempore, cum toto corde*) it is not possible that they should grow like a Bull-rush out of the mud of corrupt nature. No man can say that *Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost, 1 Cor. 12. 3.* that is, say it effectually, and from true allegiance to serve him as a Lord; for else Christ will say, *Why call you me Lord, Lord, and do not the thing which I say, Luke 6. 46.* This is the Spirit that acts not only in prophecies and miraculous gifts, but in every child of God. Even in the old Testament, *Nehem. 9. 20. Thou gavest thy good Spirit to instruct them*: them, that is, those that

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that were led out of *Egypt* by *Moses*, and hearkened to him. And much more in the state of the New Testament, *Rom. 5. 5. The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us.*

This might be extended into a great length, that the Holy Ghost is the *Comforter*, called so by appropriation, though it belong to every person of the Holy Trinity, and is well exprest in the first Divine Song, which is Printed before the *Psalms* of *David* in *Meeter*,

*Thou art the very Comforter
in all woe and distress;
The Heavenly gift of God most high
which no tongue can exprest.*

This is the *Unction*, which we have from the Holy One, 1 *Epist. Jo.*

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2. 20. The anointing which we have received of him that abideth in you, Verse 27. Anointing-oil is an oil to cure the sick, James 5. An oil of gladness, Psalm 45. A fomentation to mitigate aches and torments in the bones, and in the heart.

2. And can the *Fruits* chuse but be answerable to the *Root*? they must needs partake of it. First, because all that we do to the honour of God must be done with gladness, willingly, and chearfully: else it comes not from the Spirit of sons, but either from the Spirit of bondage, or rather from the Spirit of the world. The new Disciples received the word gladly, and were baptized, Acts 2. 41. They continued with one accord daily in the Temple with gladness, and simplicity of heart, Verse 46. I was glad when they said unto me,
we

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we will go into the house of the Lord,
Psalms 122. 1. Sing Psalms, make
a joyfull noise unto God, Psalm 66. 1.
 Let us come with assurance in our
 supplications that we shall be heard,
 praying with Faith in the Holy
 Ghost, *Jud. verse 20.* And then
 the prayer of the upright shall be
 Gods delight, *Prov. 15. 8.* and why
 Gods delight, but because his ser-
 vants delight in prayer? *He that*
sheweth mercy, let him do it with
cheerfulness, Rom. 12. 8. And he
 that giveth, offereth a blemisht sa-
 crifice, if he do it grudgingly: *For*
God loveth a cheerful giver, 2 Cor. 9.
7. Not so much but our losses and
 tribulations must be sustained with
 gladness. *Thy rod and thy staff do*
comfort me, Psalm 23. 4. Enter into
 the combat willingly, and the con-
 tinuance will be a pleasure. Our
 consolation aboundeth by Christ:
for as ye are partakers of the suffer-
ings,

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ings, so shall ye be also of the consolation, 2 Cor. I. 7. Therefore the Apostles did change the name of a famous Disciple, called Joses, into a notion of this Theme, and called him Barnabas, which is being interpreted, The son of consolation, Acts 4. 36. The Rabbies of the Jews hold themselves very close to this doctrine, and would have it observ'd, that the merrier the heart is in the Lord, the more capable it is of the Spirit of God. Partly because Miriam, when she prophesied of the mighty acts of Jehovah, took a Timbrel in her hand and danced, Exod. 15. 20. Partly because that Samuel, after he had anointed Saul to be King over Israel, told Saul, Thou shalt meet a company of Prophets coming down from the high place, with a Psaltery, a Tabret, a Pipe, and a Harp; and they shall prophesie, and the Spirit of the Lord will come upon thee,

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thee, and thou shalt prophesie with them, and shalt be turned into another man, 1 Sam. 10. verses 5, 6.

More emphatically, when Jehoshaphat called for Elisha to enquire of the Lord, says Elisha, Bring me a Minstrel, and it came to pass when the Minstrel played, that the hand of the Lord came upon him, 2 Kings 3.

15. That by the ravishing strains of Musick his mind might be exalted into Heavenly contemplations.

Which is a great check to that drowfie dulness in devotion, which our late Reformers have brought in, and have excluded the solemn melody of the Organ, and the raptures of warbling and sweet voices out of Cathedral Quires. They that miss that harmony, can best tell, how it was wont to raise up their Spirit, and as it were to carry it out of them to the Quire in Heaven. And beside, chearful-
ness

Sanctification of the Spirit, &c. 87

ness is not only an adjunct, or companion with all the works of grace, in that time they are bringing forth : but being done and finisht, that which is *post-nate*, the after-birth, as I may call it, comes with such a gleam gliding over all the Soul, with such serenity and peace of mind as cannot be exprest ; our Conscience bearing us witness that we have been conversant in doing the pleasure of the Lord, as it is *2 Cor. 1. 12. For our rejoycing is this, the testimony of our Conscience, that in simplicity, and Godly sincerity we have had our conversation in the world.*

Here I shall find work to heal the broken in heart, who look upon the fruits of their lives with no content in themselves, but are unsolaced, and cast down, because neither in number, nor in weight
have

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have they brought in that which the Lord required : they look on their ways, and they find them crooked : they look on their heart, and they find it is not constant to good purposes. To whom I rejoyne ; If this proceed from penitence, from quick sense of sin, from humility, which is opposite to a self-justifying, they have cause to praise God, that they are thus affected. Let them look narrowly if this Gold (for it may prove no worse) be currant, when it is brought to the touch-stone ; then they may lift up their eyes, and look chearfully towards Christ ; for it is no flattery to say, they are under his grace and mercy. Deal clearly, that you are astonisht at your frailties, because you think you can never work enough, never shun sin enough ; and though your Conscience condemn you, God will afford

Sanctification of the Spirit, &c. 89

ford you equity against the rigour of Conscience: for he that searcheth the heart, *knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, Rom. 8. 22.* We are conceived in sin, and it is so intimate unto us, that we have no promise to be so spiritualized in this life, that we shall not often trespass. *God hath concluded all in sin, all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all, Rom. 11. 32.* But it is one thing to fall into sin, another thing to run into it. One thing to be carried away by the passions of it, another to covet, and desire it. One thing to be overtaken in a fault, another thing to abide in it without repentance. And great odds between those that are given over to please themselves in filthiness, and between them that labour and desire to please God, though many times they attain not to perfect that willingness. The scope
of

90 . *Comforts flowing from the*
of the Seventh Chapter to the *Ro-*
mans, as I apprehend the mind of
the Apostle, is, to refresh our guilt-
ty Consciences, that a regenerate
man is not obnoxious to condemna-
tion, though his flesh upon some
temptations make him the servant
of sin, because still in his mind he
serves the law of God. And I am
confirm'd in that sense, because
without all contradiction He
teacheth the like doctrine, *Gal. 5.*
17. The flesh and the Spirit are con-
trary one to another, so that we can-
not do the things that we would.

And will the righteous God re-
quire more of a sick and feeble ser-
vant than his best endeavour?
Will not Christ accept from us the
same that he did from *Mary*, that
broke the Box of Ointment over his
head; *she hath done what she could?*
Mark 14. 8. Let a contrite heart;
that

Sanctification of the Spirit, &c. 91

that would fain be righteous, remember the prayer of *Nehemiah*, Chap. 1. verse 10. *Let thine ear be attentive to the prayer of thy servants, who desire to fear thy name:* or the protestation of *St. Paul*, *Heb. 13. 18. We trust we have a good Conscience, in all things, willing to live honestly.* But this desire and willingness must be without hypocrisie; not like iron that is gilded, base mettall within, and rich without: It must be steddly, industrious, instant to perform. Vehement holy desire is a great degree to perfection in our state. For the beginning of wisdom is the desire of discipline, *Wisd. 6. 18.* but a lazy careless desire is a great token of imperfection. *The Soul of the sluggard desireth, and bath nothing, Prov. 13. 4.* And again, *The desire of the slothful killeth him, for his hands refuse to labour, Prov. 21. 25.* Like Vagabonds,

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92 *Comforts flowing from the*

bonds, that when an Officer catcheth them, will feign that they desire a service, and to be set at work: but take them at their word, and they will run away, that they may live in loitering, and upon other mens labours. St. Paul provoking both rich and poor to liberality, according to their respective abilities, frames a rule upon that occasion, which is applicable to all good works, 2 Cor. 8. 12. *If there be a willing mind, it is accepted according to that which a man hath, and not according to that which he hath not.* Yea, in some cases, when I desire a good thing I am at my furthest. I desire the appearance of the Lord Jesus at the great day. Come Lord Jesus, come quickly. I can do no more. I desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ. I must do no more: for I must not attempt my own dissolution.

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solution. I wish for the conversion of the *Jews* to the Faith, I must not compel them. This holds in a few things. In the most, willingness must shew some practice; as in the same Chapter, Verse 11. *Now therefore perform the doing of it: that as there was a readiness to will, so there may be a performance also of that which you have.* But to desire to do, and to do little, is a sign that there was little desire. This hath overthrown many, that they desire not to reach high. But we know that God gives his Grace by Talents, and not in petty sums; yet a luke-warm professor can be content with mites. Could such a one get a moderate competency of righteousness, knowing that without holiness no man shall see God, then he would sit down, and let others strive, if they like it, to be the tallest Cedars in the house of the Lord.

There are many such indifferent Disciples, that would be always babes, and never come to a manly growth: wrap themselves about with as many fig-leaves as would cover their shame, and think they want no more apparel. These if they knew what it were to a dram, that would serve them to attain salvation, they would reach so far if the grace of God would assist them; but would put themselves to no trouble to purifie their body and Spirit any further. Here's a pretence of a desire to serve God, but with so much laziness, with so much lethargy, that the Lord disdains it as dead carion. He would serve God, and he would serve Mammon. He approves much prayer, but he cannot attend it. He would not for all the world but be a Christian: yet a small share in profit,
or

Sanctification of the Spirit, &c. 95

or a snap at a little pleasure will pervert him to be a dishonest Christian. But real and holy desire stands up for much, though it cannot do so much honour to God as he would: like the disease *Ephialtes*, that oppresseth us in the night between sleeping and waking, we would turn to the other side of the bed, and cannot. But to shake off this *Incubus*, it listens after all the noble exploits that the Saints of God have done, and would exactly follow them; or, if it were possible, run before them: if not, it will be heartily sorry that frailty makes it come short of the best. It would compound for no less than to pay all, if it were able. Then you shall find the heart pant often with these inward earnings; “Sweet Saviour, should any of thy
“servants love thee better than I?
“should any of thy Disciples be

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“more obedient than I? No Lord:
“for none of thine are so much en-
“debted to thy passion, because
“none had so many sins to be for-
“given. How amiable are thy
“Commandments O : Lord of
“hosts? my Soul thirsteth to be
“the nearest of them that shall
“stand before the presence of the
“living God. Lord let me love
“thee as *Peter* did, Lord let me
“love thee more than these.

So I have revealed the First com-
forts flowing from the Holy Ghost
by his Inhabitation, and inward
Testimony : and the next Com-
forts by the Fruits of Righteous-
ness, and those sincere desires of
Godliness, which by Christs mer-
ciful interpretation supply our fail-
ings. All which I conclude out of
our Church-Song made to the Ho-
ly Ghost.

Visit

Sanctification of the Spirit, &c. 97

*Visit our minds, and into us
Thy Heavenly Grace inspire,
That in all Truth and Godlineſſ
We may have true deſire.*

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CHAP.

2. *Reflections of the Spirit Ec. 97*

... into us
... the heavenly
... that in all things and Godliness
... it is a very beautiful thing

CH. AT.



CHAP. IV.

Prayer is the great Instrument of a Christian's Comfort. Concerning Prayer three things to be considered: I. The Substance or Matter of Prayer, in three Heads. I. Thanksgivings. 2. Supplications. 3. Intercessions. II. The Qualification of them that Pray. III. The fitness of Time for Prayer.

THE order laid down in the beginning carries me to the Fourth part of Christian Consolation, The Heavenly delight of Prayer. It is the lively expression of Faith, the Ambassador which Hope sends to God, the

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comfort

100 *Prayer is the great Instrument*
comfort of Love, the fellowship of
the Spirit, our Advocate unto our
Advocate Christ Jesus: our In-
cense, whose smoke ascends up, and
is sweet in the nostrils of the most
High: which promiseth such abun-
dant success, that humility had ra-
ther conceive than utter it, lest we
should seem to boast. A lowly
suppliant to God never rose up
from his knees, without some stir-
rings of gracious expectation, nor
without a propheticall instinct that
the mercy of the Lord was nigh at
hand. Which fortunate presage
Isaiah confirms unto us, Chap. 56.
7. *I will make them joyfull in my house*
of Prayer. And how readily may
we use this mighty Ordinance of
God? how soon it may be done,
if we have a mind to it? What
freedom have we (no man can de-
ny it) to utter a brief Prayer (and
very often if we will) in the great-
est

est toil and business? The tongue of the stammerer shall be ready to speak elegantly, Isa. 32. 4. It is so facile a part of Religion, as he that hath a tongue can scarce miss it. It is as easie to say *Our Father which art in Heaven*, as to see Heaven which is always in our eye. Every Sect of Pagans and Idolaters were taught by instinct to fly unto their *comports*: as the Heathen Mariners cried every man to his God, Jon. 1. 5. An Atheist falling into a sudden danger, as suppose a Pistol were put to his breast, would cry out as soon to God to help him, as any true believer. And he that upon deliberation did say there was no God, will break out into a confession, before he is aware, that there is a God, by natural impulsion. A poor Whelp hath found a way to lick its own sores whole with its tongue: so when we are
opprest

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opprest with misery, whether the evil of sin, or the evil of punishment, we are prompted by the natural notions of our Soul to lick the sore with our tongue, that is, to call for help from Heaven. That Soul, which God did breath into man, cannot shake off this principle, That all succour comes from above, for which it must breath out it self unto God. No creature among Beasts, but, being smitten, will fall upon the way to relieve it self, except a blind incogitant sinner. Such as have written upon their sagacity in that kind, tell us, That the Fishes in the fresh waters being struck with a tool of Iron, will rub themselves upon the glutinous skin of the Tench to be cured. The Hart wounded with an Arrow runs to the Herb *Dittany* to bite it, that the shaft may fall out, that stuck in his
body.

body. The Swallow will seek out the green Tetterwort, to recover the eyes of her young ones, when they are blinded. Only a stupid sinner forgets how to redintegrate his miserable estate, by throwing himself down prostrate before God in humble petition. He walks forlorn, lost to himself, lost to his right wits, because he hath no knowledge, or no good opinion of the comfort of *Prayer*. Which is my purpose to make him learn by that which follows, looking upon *the Substance or Matter of Prayer, the Qualification of him that Prayeth, and the fitness of Time when Prayer is to be made.*

I. *The Matter of Prayer* is as copious as all occasions that can be named: it shall suffice for my purpose to treat of three Heads, *Glorifications with Thanksgivings, Supplications,*

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of supplications, and Intercessions.*

The first is bent to magnifie
the Almighty, to extol his Name,
to praise him for his Goodness.
This is the *Hallelujah* of David,
and of the Saints in Heaven, that is,
give glory to *Jah*, or the great *Je-*
hovah: which is followed with a
rare variety in the Song of the three
Children, *Glorye works of the Lord,*
blest ye the Lord, praise him, and
magnifie him for ever. It is a ditty
that is balsamed all over with a
perfusion of delight, to praise God
from all things that he hath made,
from the centre of the Earth to the
top of Heaven. And this is most
divinely exprest in that which is
called *St. Ambrose* his Hymn in our
Common-Prayer; *We praise thee,*
O God, we knowledge thee to be the
Lord — And let the servant of God
that will listen to me repeat it often
and

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and often. For it is a piece of devotion so sweetly spread out into the branches of Heavenly praise, Confession of Faith, and devout Petitions, that the like did never come forth, since the time it was penn'd. Let me speak to others out of the sense of my own heart, and I may safely profess, that in the service and worship of God, I find nothing so delightful, as to continue in the praise and honour of the Lords. If another contradict it, and say, that there are some means more aptly calculated, as I may speak, for the high Meridian of Comfort; He is He, and I am I, and I appeal from him to my self, what I find in my own motions, and feelings. And what man knoweth the things of a man, save the Spirit of a man, which is in him? 1 Cor. 2. 11. And I observe that in the prudent institution of our Church,

to

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to hold forth the Consolation we
have in Christ, after the partici-
pation of his Body and Bloud in the
blessed Sacrament, it teacheth us
to break out all together into a Ju-
bilee, *Glory be to God on high —*
We praise thee, we bleſſ thee, we glo-
rifie thee, &c. For when we are
full of that holy Feast, and have
eaten Angelsfood, we fall into the
tune of Angels, and signifie imme-
diately before we depart, how
much our Spirit rejoyceth in God
our Saviour.

But who knew better the mind
of the Lord, than the Spirit it self
in those admirable extacies of Da-
vid? *Sing praises unto God : for it*
is pleasant, Psalm 135. 3. *Sing*
praises unto our God : for it is plea-
sant, and praise is comely, Psalm
147. 1. *Sing aloud unto God our*
Strength: make a joyful noise unto
the

of a Christian's Comfort. 107

the God of Jacob, Psalm 81. 1. Every furrow in the book of the *Psalms* is sown with such seeds. I know nothing more certain, more constant to expel the sadness of the world, than to sound out the praises of the Lord as with a Trumpet: and when the heart is cast down, it will make it rebound from Earth to Heaven. This was the wisdom of the holy Church throughout all the world (till distempers put us out of the right way not long since) to solemnize the praise of our Saviour upon the Feasts of *Christmas*, *Easter*, &c. that we might celebrate the great works which God hath done for us, with the voice of joy, and praise, and with a multitude that kept Holy Day, Psalm 42. 4. O give thanks unto the Lord, be telling of his mercy and salvation from day to day: Give thanks unto him with cheerfulness,

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fulness, for a joyful and pleasant
thing it is to be thankful. Who is
a just man, and in fair condition;
that would not pay a debt, and be
exonerated of it? He that can say
he hath paid what he ow'd, is it
not a quietness to his mind to be
discharg'd?
It goes further a great deal, and
brings more advantage, when we
offer up the sacrifice of retribution,
the income of *Thanksgiving* unto
the Lord; for we draw on more
benefits, when we declare the
goodness of the Lord upon the re-
ceipt of the old. And the *grati-
tude* which God gives, is a thou-
sand fold greater than the present
which we bring. This is proposed
to them that will fly high from the
pinacle of the Lord's Prayer, the
first Petition, *Hallowed be thy
Name.*

2. Neither

2. Neither let them faint that stoop low in supplication: for mercy will embrace them on every side.

Two things being put together are of much weight: we pray with God's Spirit, and by his Word. He invites us in his Word to pray: and he gives the gift with which we pray. *I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of Grace and Supplications, Zach. 12.* 10. Did He pour upon us his Grace? and have we received a Commandment, the outward sign of his Will? and can we suspect after all this, that He will put us off, and deny us? Is his Grace given in vain? or hath He sent his Word to delude us? He hath kindled a fire in our breasts, and it is an Heavenly

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ly flame that burns within us.
“ Lord, though we are vile and de-
“ spicable, thou canst not despise
“ the acting of thine own Spirit, nor
“ frustrate thine own operations.
Or do we come unbidden when we
cast our selves down in thy pre-
sence ? “ Nay Lord, thou hast
“ beckned, and called us, Come
“ unto me all ye that are weary and
“ heavy laden. Hold fast to these
two, and who can forbid us to be
comforted ? the Lord bids us pray,
and he gives us a heart to pray.
For it is not strange to his mercy
(perhaps it is strange to mans con-
cept) to give us strength to bring
forth that obedience, both to will
and to do, which himself hath com-
manded. As he gave the Blessed
Virgin strength to bring forth the
Babe, who was conceived, and
formed in her womb by the Holy
Ghost.

This

This I do the rather enforce, because we can see no comfort in our selves: therefore as I derive all the vertue and spirituality that is in Prayer from the efficacy of Grace. So I refer all the succels to Christ, in whom we are blessed with all spiritual blessings, *Eph. 1. 3. Whatsoever ye ask the Father in my Name, he will give it, Jo. 15. 16.* But He and his Father are one, therefore he says, *If ye shall ask the Father any thing in my Name, I will do it, Jo. 14. verse 14.* If we had no better means to God than our selves, and our own merits, there were no hope to speed: nay our hearts would be as faint and dead, as if we heard our selves denied before we had opened our lips. But we conclude, as it is in the most of our Collects, *through Christ our Lord.* When we bring that Name in the
rear,

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rear, and quote him for our Merit and Mediator, then I know it will be well, and that the Lord will hear the petitions of his servants. Should we not put our requests into Christs hand to offer them to his Father, *Sion* might spread forth her complaints, and there would be none to comfort her: and we might remain for ever in that heavy plight, *Psalm 77. verse 3. I remembered God, and was troubled: I complained, and my spirit was overwhelmed.* But if we renounce our wretched selves, and imagine not the least intrinsecal perfection to be in our Prayers, do we fail then by the Cape of Good Hope? yes, because God is contented to yield upon such addresses. *Jacob* may wrestle with the Angel all night, and protest he will not let him go till he have blessed him. But *Videtur est quia voluit*: God was over-

overcome, because he would be overcome of *Jacob*: he lets us prevail, because he is willing to yield: but there is no strength in us to win, if he would not suffer himself to be vanquish't.

There is no other person but Christ, in whom the Father (I know not what kind of necessity to call it) cannot but be well pleased. Which made him say before his Disciples, *Joh. 11. 41. Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me, and I know that thou hearest me always*: As it is also, *Heb. 5. 7. Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up Prayers and Supplications, with strong crying and tears, was heard for his piety*. This is the preheminance of our High Priest, who is an Orator for us all, that the Lord cannot reject his Prayers. Therefore committing our daily
Oraisons

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Oraisonsto our High Priest, to bear them into the Holy of Holies before his Father, they are in a sure hand: and they that know his Name will put their trust in thee, *Psalme* 9. 10. Much more they that know his Office perfectly. Wherefore let Prayer carry on these considerations with it; That we are invited by God to that duty: That the Spirit instigates us unto it, and helps our infirmities, *Rom.* 8. 26. That it is presented to the Father by the mediation of the Son; then how canst thou be sad, O my Soul, and fear to miscarry? Is not the lot fallen unto thee in a pleasant field? and may'st thou not promise to thy self a very goodly heritage?

Without all dispute then proceed unto *Prayer*, and for a beginning, 1. Ask in Faith, *James* 1. 6. that is, attribute unto God that he
is

of a Christian's Comfort. 115

is Almighty, and can do above all that we ask, or think: Consent to his truth, that he is faithful in his promises: for he that believeth not those, makes God a lyar. Acknowledge his goodness and mercy through Christ, that He will withhold no good thing from them that lead a Godly life. Let there be no wavering, no disputing about these Attributes of God, lest we be condemned out of our own mouth. So much Faith, so much efficacy, so much confidence, so much comfort in Prayer.

Then will a solicitous Christian reply, What will become of me? I have not that plenitude of Faith: at least in sundry occasions I have it not to ascertain my self that I shall prevail with God. No more had *Abraham* himself a perfect Faith without any flaw. Excellent things
G are

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are spoken of him, *Rom. 4. 18.* Who against hope believed in hope: and that he staggered not at the promise, but was strong in Faith, Verse 20. Yet see how he stooped a little, *Gen. 17. 18.* Shall a Son be born unto him that is an hundred years old? and shall Sarah that is ninety years old, bear! O that Ishmael may live? God is not extream to mark what is done amiss in every convulsion of Faith: which appears, *Psalms 31. verse 22.* I said in my haste, I am cast out of thine eyes: nevertheless thou heardest the voice of my supplication, when I cried unto thee. You must be sure that in general David subscribed to the power, and truth, and goodness of God: but there was a temptation upon him at that time in some particular case, in which he distrusted, or doubted that there was no likelihood to prevail. But if there be such a one
that

that says, I will pray, but I know I shall be never the better, he is an infidel, and mocks God: in that bad mind he did well to say he should be never the better: for he did usurp a form of Godliness, and denied the power thereof.

He is the right Supplicant, but a very rare one, that hath no staggering or diffidence in his heart, that comes close up to our Saviour's rule, *Mark 11. 24. What things soever ye desire when ye Pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.* Yet the Lord will not cast them off, who are but in the next form, and do not resolutely promise success unto themselves in the instant of their present Supplications: but bear it thus between Faith and doubting, whether I shall succeed in this or that I am not confident, but of this I am most assured,

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that I shall be the better for my
Prayers. And I would it were
thus and thus, because I conceive
it would be best for me : but I am
certain it will be better than the
best that I can imagine, which the
Lord knows to be most expedient.

Another perhaps may wrangle
himself into an error, and say, How
do the Heathen and the wicked
obtain good things, if nothing will
prevail with God but the Prayer
of Faith? Consider that even a Pa-
gan and Idolater would never Pray,
but that they have some kind of
belief to obtain fruit by their Pray-
ers. The King of *Nineveh* had a
solemn Fast at the hearing of *Jo-*
nah's prophesie; For, says he, *Who*
can tell if God will turn, and repent,
and turn away from his fierce anger,
that we perish not? *Jon. 3. 9.* None
but a Lunatick would ask for relief
from

from them, that had neither knowledge of his case, nor power to redress it. O but the prayers of such are not grounded on the Faith that we speak of. It is true: such a Faith as possesse Idolaters, is not that which impetrates mercy from God. Then I say, neither *Jews*, nor *Mahumetans*, nor wicked men get any thing by that Prayer, to which the promise is made, *Ask, and ye shall have.* For whether they Pray or not, all that they obtain had come to pass, though they had held their peace. It is for our sins, and to scourge us, that they have kingdoms, and victories, it is not their motley-faith that did purchase them. And for all manner of store and plenty that the Earth yields to them, it is but as God gives fodder to the Cattle, and meat to the yong Ravens that call upon him.

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2. The Prayer of *Faith* then is only available: but out of the mouth of an *humble* suiter. For who will give an alms to a proud begger? Thus saith the high and lofty one, that inhabiteth Eternity, I dwell with him that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones, *Isa. 57. 15.* Let the comparison between the *Publican* and the *Pharisee* remain for ever in our memory, *Luke 18.* The Prayer of the poor destitute, the contrite, the penitent, the bleeding heart is a sacrifice well season'd with the salt of anguish and misery. Away with high looks, and high words. Lord, thou dost hear the desire of the humble, and dost prepare their heart, *Psalms 10. 17.* And God comforteth those that are cast down, *2 Cor. 7. 6.* Put your
self

self back, who are but dust and ashes in a great distance from the Lord, that you may behold him the better in his infinite greatness. And a lowly heart will never spare to deject the body. *O come let us worship and fall down, and kneel before the Lord our Maker.* Solomon pray'd upon his knees, *1 Chron. 6.* so did *Daniel, Chap. 6.* so did *Peter*, when messengers came to him from *Cornelius, Acts 9.* so *St. Paul:* *For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus, Eph. 3. 14.* And not only men upon Earth, but the glorious Spirits in Heaven, cast themselves and their Crowns down before him that sitteth on the Throne, *Revel. 4.* Nay the Son of God fell down upon his knees, and pray'd unto his Father, *Luke 22. 41.*

And *Fasting*, which is a pregnant

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circumstance of *humiliation*, was
much in use with Prayer ; the in-
stances are innumerable : to signifie
we had no part in any comfort,
nor any delight in the Creatures,
till we were reconciled to the Lord.
So was *sackcloth* used ; and all ap-
parel of beauty, all ornaments of
riches and pride were put off
for that time. Let them be no
more than outward circumstances ;
yet they are significant.

But that which is a sure compa-
nion, and most intimate to *humility*
in Prayer, is *Patience*. It breaks not
away in a pet, because it is not an-
swer'd at the first or second asking :
that's disdainful and arrogant. It
holds on, and attends, and cries
till the throat is dry : *I waited pati-
ently for the Lord, Psalm 40. 1.*
And there must be patient continu-
ance in them that seek for Glory
and

and Immortality, *Rom. 2. 7. Faith* is the *foundation* of Prayer: and, to continue the Metaphor, *Patience* is the Roof. The winds blow: look to the foundation, or the building will fall. Rain and storms will descend: but if they light upon a Roof that is close and compact, they run aside, and are cast upon the ground. He that expects God's pleasure from day to day, will neither faint, nor fret, that his suit hangs long in the Court of Requests: such storms as proceed from murmuring, cannot beat through a solid Roof. Says *Habak. Chap. 2. Verse 3.* A great thing will the Lord bring to pass, but not presently says the Lord: *The Vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lye: though it tarry, wait for it, because it will surely come.* Many diseases will never be cured well,

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unless they be long a curing: and
many deliverances will never be
thoroughly settled, unless they be
long a preparing: and many mer-
cies are hid like seed in the ground,
and will be long a growing.

I give God thanks that every
blessing of worldly Comfort that I
Pray'd for, the longer I was kept
from it; and the more I pray'd for
it, I found it the greater in the end.

Observe that there is nothing of
moment, yea be it of lesler and
vulgar size, with which the Provi-
dence of God hath not interwoven
a thousand things to be dispatcht
with it, which requires time, per-
haps seven years to finish them.
Expect therefore from the Divine
wisdom to do all things in their or-
der: and give honour to the Su-
pream Majesty to wait his leisure.

For

For yet a little, and he, that shall come, will come, and will not tarry, Heb. 10. 37.

3. The third thing which gives assurance of Comfort to Prayer is Zeal, Devotion, Fervency, which will pluck on Patience further and further. For he that is zealous in any thing will not easily give over, till he have brought his ends to pass. Zeal is a continual and an earnest supplicant, it Prays *without ceasing*, 1 Theff. 5. 17. Prays *exceedingly*, 1 Theff. 3. 10. Asks with confidence, seeks with diligence, knocks with perseverance. A swarm of Bees, that is, many thousands must gather into a Hive to fill it with Hony-combs : and a swarm of Prayers is sweeter before the Lord than the Hony, and the Hony-comb. Likewise it is as vehement as it is assiduous, *labouring fervently for you in Prayers,*

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Prayers, Coloss. 4. 12. Stir up your
wit, and diligence, and memory,
and meditations, when you come
to spread out your wants before
your Father : but if you yawn out
heedless, heartless petitions, you
shall depart with discouragement,
as it is Psalm 80. 4. O Lord God of
hosts, how long wilt thou be angry
with the Prayer of thy people ? The
Laodiceans were lukewarm, nei-
ther hot nor cold in the worship of
God : therefore the Spirit said to
the Angel of that Church, Be zea-
lous, and repent, Revel. 3. 19. Zeal
is defined to be a vehement and in-
flamed love. There must be an ar-
dour, and a flame in Prayer, as if
we would mount it up like fire to
Heaven. Then we may say that a
Seraphin hath laid a coal from the
Altar upon our mouth, and touch-
ed our lips, Isa. 6. 7. Zeal takes
away the Soul for a time, and car-
ries

ries it far above us. I write to them that have felt it, that it darts a mans Spirit out of him like an arrow out of a bow. This is it which infallibly begets Hope, Comfort, Patience, all in a Sheaf, as they are divinely put together, *Rom. 12. verses 11, 12. Fervent in Spirit, serving the Lord, rejoicing in Hope, patient in Tribulation, continuing instant in Prayer.*

The transportment of Zeal will excuse, or rather commend some Ejaculations of Prayer, which seem to be too bold with God; as *Psalm 44. How long wilt thou turn away thy face from us O Lord? and forgettest our misery and trouble: So Jer. 14. 9. Why should'st thou be as a man asleep? and as a mighty man that cannot save us?* And we do but follow our Saviour's pattern in it upon the Cross, *My God, my God, why*

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why hast thou forsaken me ? Tell not
a troubled heart that is in anguish,
tell it not of modesty : it is a com-
plement it will not be tied to. The
Shunamite swallowed up in sorrow
for the loss of her child, runs to
mount *Carmel* to *Elisba*, and before
she said any thing, she catcht him
fast by the feet : *Gehazi* thought it
irreverent and unwoman-like beha-
viour, and laid hold to thrust her
away : *Let her alone*, says the Pro-
phet, *for her soul is vexed within*
her, 2 Kings 4. 27. The passions of
an afflicted Soul have much indul-
gence to break out far. They are
not in good compass, till vehemen-
cy of Zeal carry them beyond or-
dinary rule and fashion. *Mary*
Magdalen did more than this, the
first time she came to our Saviour,
Luke 7. 37. she came into a strange
house without leave and admit-
tance : into the house of a *Pharisee*,
and

and those hypocrites would not admit suspected sinners: she takes opportunity to come at dinner-time, being a guest unbidden: she gives no salutation to the company, but falls down at our Saviours feet, and lays her kisses thick upon them: says a holy writer to it, it is *Gregory the Great*, *Hast thou no forehead, woman? hath modesty quite left thee?* And he answers himself, *Minimè, pudor intus erat.* That which she was asham'd of was within her, she was so ashamed of her sins, that she forgot all other shamefac'dness. You see that Zeal will pardon boldness, and will give authority to Prayer to expostulate with God; and hath a toleration, as it were, to quarrel with his mercy.

Now a Christian, sensible of many imperfections, will cry out, O that I could attain to some degrees
of

130 Prayer is the great Instrument
of Zeal. I am no *Shunamite*, no
Mary Magdalen, no *Paul* fervent in
Spirit. I am carried away with di-
stractions, when I speak unto the
Lord in Prayer; and through the
multitude of various thoughts I for-
get what I am about. O Christ
help our frailties, and keep our
minds fixed upon thee, when we
ask any thing in thy Name. One
body cannot be in two places at
once: and one heart cannot be in
Heaven and Earth together. O
let us cover our faces with the
wings of the Cherubims, *Isa. 6. 2.*
that we may not see enticements to
distract us. Watch, and Pray:
watch this wandering heart, that it
may not be stoln away by fancies,
that move in our mind continually,
like motes in the beams of the Sun.
Defie Satan, and bid him abandon.
As they that have committed a rob-
bery run away from a Hue and
Cry:

Cry: so the Devil will run away from the noise of your Supplications, when you challenge him for sacrilege, that he hath robb'd you of your Devotion.

To do more yet, I will assay to prescribe a remedy to a disease, I fear, not quite to be cur'd. But first feel your own pulse, and your fitness for the Heavenly work of *Prayer* before you begin it. See that you be not drowzy and slothful: for a sluggard will be incumbered with various and recurrent thoughts. Neither would I have you to protract *Prayer* to that length, which otherwise you would have done, when your mind and devotion fail you. Short and pithy *Prayers*, *Collects* well fill'd with words and matter, and not protracted till they may be censur'd for babbling, are more prevalent
with

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with God, when Zeal doth manage
them, than to spend out time with-
out a fervent and well fixt intenti-
on. The Prayers of the great
Saints in Scripture are compendious,
they are strong in sense, and speak
home. A rose is sweeter in the
bud, than in the blown flower :
and what you abate at one time in
length to anticipate distraction, you
may fill up the measure when you
will by using them the oftner. I
have known some servants of God,
very circumspect in their ways, that
use for the most part to read their
Prayers either Printed or Written,
that seeing the matter of them be-
fore their eyes, they might the bet-
ter contain themselves from all ex-
travagancies. To which end it is
prescribed in the Church of *Rome*,
though a Priest can say the Mass by
heart, yet he must read it out of his
book, to keep the closer to the in-
tention

tention of his duty. But when all is said, happy are they that offend least in this kind : for all offend.

And who can we blame but ourselves, that are remiss, and not half so earnest as we should be to prevail with God ? which I demonstrate thus : Let there be any thing in our Prayers, which we are more eagerly set upon to obtain, than all the rest, we will never start aside, nor run out of our circle when we come to that petition. *Animus est ubi amat*, The mind is with that, and in that which it loves. If we did long for every member of our Prayer, as much as for that special thing, which we did so eminently desire, we would continue from the beginning to the end of Prayer with little or no diversion.

This bottom is not wound up,
till

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till I give a warning to Zeal, as it is
Gal. 5. 18. It is good to be zealously
affected always in a good thing.
Look that your petitions be mo-
delled into such things, as
the Word and Spirit do appoint,
and stir you up to ask, and you
shall not be ashamed of your sacrifice,
Hos. 4. 19. But if you be frivo-
lous, the Prophet will tell you
again, *Ye have sown the wind, and*
ye shall reap the whirlwind, Hos. 8.
7. or the Apostle tells you plainly,
Ye ask, and receive not, because ye
ask amiss, James 4. 3. Ask for the
kingdom of Heaven, for the main-
tenance of God's glory, for new-
ness of life, and obedience to the
will of God; ask for pardon of
sins in Christ Jesus, for grace in the
Holy Ghost to resist temptations;
ask our offended Father for mercy,
to be delivered from the wrath
which we have deserved: and let
the

the seventh part of our Prayer be for the things of this life, and for them with moderation, according to that port and person which we bear in the world, and be contented with the portion allotted to you: aim by this level, and you hit the mark. What mighty blessings did fall upon *Solomon*, because he desired not the advantages of pomp and luxury, when God put it to him in a dream what to ask? he desired an understanding and a wise heart: and the speech pleased the Lord, that *Solomon* had asked this thing, *1 Kings 3. 10.*

3. *Intercessions*, that is, Prayers wherein we mediate to God for others, must now be thought of, and the Comfort redounding from them. The duty is strictly commanded to Pray for one another, *James 5. 16.* And, *I will that Intercessions*

136 *Prayer is the great Instrument*
tercessions be made for all men, for
Kings and all that are in Authority,
1 Tim. 2. 1. when we do so, we
have done what we are bidden : and
having done that, albeit we are un-
profitable servants to God, we are
not uncomfortable to our selves.
For it is the first part of the reward
of a good deed, that we can say to
our Conscience we have done it.
Beside, the work of love is de-
lightful to the Spirit ; and to help
others in our Prayers is the largest
and widest work of Charity, wil-
ling to do good to all upon the
face of the Earth, and stretching
forth its hands that the whole world
may be the better for the calves of
our lips. Chiefly commending the
whole state of Christs Church to
Gods mercy, yet also, (as may be
seen in our Collect used on *Good-*
friday) not forgetting to remember
Christ for Jews, Turks, Infidels,
Here-

Hereticks, to take from them ignorance, hardness of heart, and contempt of the Word: not only that the Sheep of Christs pasture might be blest, but that it might be well with Nero, and such as he, that were the Lions that devoured us. This is Charity not only to have Communion with all the Saints, but compassion for all the world. Therein we follow the foot-steps of Christ in his mediatorship, as far as we are able, who hath an *unchangeable Priesthood*, and *ever lives to make Intercession for us*, Heb. 7. 25. And *who bare the sins of many, and made Intercession for the transgressors*, Isa. 53. 12.

Likewise it is the office of those that have great interest in God's favour, to bless others with their Prayers, as the Lord told *Abimelech King of Gerar, Abraham is a Prophet,*
and

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and he shall pray for thee, and thou
shalt live, Gen. 20. 7. So he said to
Eliphaz the Temanite, and to his
other two friends, *My servant Job*
shall Pray for you, for him will I ac-
cept, Job 42. 8. All Israel had been
destroyed for worshipping the Calf
in Horeb, had not *Moses* his chosen
stood before him in the breach, to
turn away his wrath, *Psalms* 106.
23. What? says an old writer, art
thou *Moses* more merciful than
God? art thou more pitiful to the
people, than he that saves us from
all evil? No, says he, thou art in-
finite short of the loving kindness
of the Lord; but he put thy Cha-
rity to the proof, to see what ve-
hement entreaties thou wouldst
make for the deliverance of the
Nation. When the same people
were like to be overrun by the
Philistines, what course did *Samuel*
take? says he, *Gather all Israel to*
Mizpah,

of a Christian's Comfort. 139

Mizpah, (which was a *Proseucha*,
or place for publick Prayer) and I
will Pray for you to the Lord, 1 Sam.
7. 5. And you shall find most victo-
rious success upon it, *Verse* 10.
What comfortable Orators are the
mighty Saints of God ? what a safe-
guard it is unto us all, when they
live among us ? A wise man is the
price and redemption of many fools,
says a Heathen : so a Mediator,
that is very dear to God, is a pro-
tection not only to the good, but to
the wicked that are about him. Have
we not cause then to Pray for the
continuance of such, that they may
live long to Pray for us ? Should
Paul need to desire the Prayers of
the *Thessalonians* ? 1 *Epist.* 5. 25.
or of the *Hebrews* ? Chap. 13. 18.
Could they forget that, which so
much concern'd their welfare ?
Now the worthy servants of the
Lord may prevail much one by
H one :

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one: others of the common rank had need to meet by hundreds, and by thousands, in great congregations, that every single mans Prayer may be a drop in a shower, that while every man Prays for all, all may Pray for every man. So great is the opinion of good consequents from the Intercession of Gods servants, that infidels and ungodly, who thought it would be labour in vain to speak to God for themselves, have sued unto the Saints on Earth to prefer petitions for them. *Darius*, that worshipt false Gods, sent to the *Jews* at *Hierusalem* to Pray for the life of the King and his Sons, *Ezra* 6. 10. And they that persecuted *Jeremy* besought him, *Pray for us unto the Lord our God*, *Jer.* 42. 20. And *Simon Magus* turn'd himself to *Peter* and the Apostles to intercede for him, *Pray unto the Lord for me, that none of these things*
which

which you have spoken, come upon me, Acts 8. 24. This is the sum, that Intercession of Prayer, whether active or Passive, whether it be to give, or to receive a blessing, is exceeding full of Consolation.

II. To go in order to the next Head, Who they be that shall get benefit, and comfort by Prayer, is quickly defined. We know that *all things work together for good to them that love God, Rom. 8. 28.* to none other, you may be sure. He that doth not truly call the God of Heaven his Father, as Christ begins his Prayer, shall have no share in the portion of Sons. We may intercede for prophane and impenitent men, and our Prayer shall return into our own bosom. But while they remain such, the mercies of the Lord will be strange unto them. They are not of the bo-

142 *Prayer is the great Instrument*
dy of the mystical Church, and all
the fresh Springs are derived unto
them that are within the Sanctuary.
While the *Jews* continued under
the hardness of their heart, God
discharged the Prophet for appear-
ing in their behalf. *Pray not thou*
for this people, neither lift up cry,
nor Prayer for them, neither make
Intercession to me, for I will not hear
thee, Jer. 7. 16. And with no less,
or rather more severity, *Ezek. 14.*
14. Though these three men, Noah,
Job and Daniel, were in the land,
they should deliver none but their
own Souls. And if the wicked
commence a suit in their own name,
the Lord will not be entreated of
them. What have they to do with
holy Ordinances, that have no
fellowship with holy practices?
To come before the Lord with a
lap full of sins, and a mouth full of
prayers, what an Heterogeneal Sa-
crifice

crifice is it? will the Mediator Christ Jesus bring it for them before his Father? *If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not bear me, Psalm 66. 18. And the throne of iniquity shall have no fellowship with thee, Psalm 99. verse 20.*

Many in our land, and in our days Pray for the confusion of them that brought all to confusion; but themselves are in pursuance of notorious crimes, and rebellion against God. They would advance that government to which we have sworn to be faithful by the Oaths of Supremacy and Allegiance: but they make no conscience to break their Oaths and Covenants which they have made to God. It is not to suppress sin, and tyranny, and injustice, that they are instant with God; but to be revenged for their own injuries and losses.

144 *Prayer is the great Instrument*
ses. Their Prayers are compound-
ed with such sins as quite marre
them. So many a pair of Beads
have been dropt in corners for the
extirpation of the Protestant Reli-
gion. Many a Mass hath been said
for the good success of Jesuitical
Treasons. Many a Rosary was run
over to bring the *Powder-treason* to
its bloody birth. If they have no
better stuff than this in their Mat-
tins, they had as good Pray to De-
vils as to Saints. *I will that men*
Pray always, or every where, lifting
up holy hands, without wrath, 1 Tim.
2. 8. Let go wrath, and malice,
and bitterness. Holiness becometh
the house of Prayer, and holiness
becometh the mouth of Prayer.
If any man be a worshipper of God,
and doth his will, him he heareth,
Jo. 9. 31. Do justly, live chastly,
give charitably, walk circumspect-
ly, and then Pray confidently.
For

For whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his Commandments, and do those things which are pleasing in his sight, 1 Epist. Jo. 3. 22.

But then will the trembling Christian say, wo is me, for I am a great sinner, wo is me, for I am filthy, and polluted, and of unclean lips, *Isa. 6. 5.* then how shall I turn me to my God in Prayer? O thou that fallest low upon the Earth, oppressed with the burden of thy sins, stand up, and be chearful before God: none is fit for Prayer in the Militant Church, but such an humble sinner. God draws thee, and none but those that are like unto thee, near unto his mercy. Though thy sins do cleave unto thee, be comforted that thou dost not cleave unto thy sins. *Elkanah*

gave a more worthy portion to
H 4 *Hannah*

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Hannah that was barren, but meek and devout, than to *Peninnah* that bare him sons and daughters, but was proud and scornful, 1 *Sam.* 1. 5. God hath heard his beloved Son, when he made Prayers for sinners, will hear those sinners that are his Sons, when they ask any thing in the name of Christ.

III. Good fruit must be brought forth in a good season, which only remains to be thought upon, and to be added to the Consolation of Prayer. *For every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the Heaven, Eccles. 3. 1.* But neither days, nor hours, nor seasons did ever come amiss to faithful Prayer. *Evening, and morning, and at Noon will I Pray, and cry aloud, and He shall hear my voice, Psal. 55. 17.* which includes all the space of duration. For all time is inclu-

included in *Morning, Noon, and Night. Pray without ceasing, 1 Thefl. 5. 17. Praying always with all Prayer and Supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance, Ephes. 6. 18.* Short passes, quick ejections, concise forms and remembrances, holy breathings, Prayers like little posies, may be sent forth without number on every occasion, and God will note them in his book.

But all that have a care to walk with God, fill their vessels more largely as soon as they rise, before they begin the work of the day, and before they lie down again at night. Which is to observe what the Lord appointed in the Levitical ministry, a *morning*, and an *evening Lamb* to be laid upon the Altar. So with them that are not stark irreligious, Prayer is the key to open

148 *Prayer is the great Instrument*
the day, and the bolt to shut in the
night. But as the skies drop the
early dew, and the evening dew
upon the grass : yet it would not
spring and grow green by that con-
stant and double falling of the dew,
unless some great showers at certain
seasons did supply the rest. So the
customary devotion of Prayer
twice a-day is the falling of the
early and the latter dew : but if
you will increase and flourish in the
works of grace, empty the great
clouds sometimes, and let them fall
into a full shower of Prayer : chuse
out the seasons in your own discre-
tion, when Prayer should overflow
like *Jordan* in the time of harvest.
Keep strictly, as much as you are
able, to those times of the day,
which you have designed to appear
in before the Lord : for then you
offer up not only your Prayers,
but the strict observation of set
times,

times, which is a double sacrifice, and an evidence that you will not dispense to pretermitt that holy work for any avocation. He that refers himself at large to Pray when he is at leisure, gives God the worst of the day, that is, his idle time. I account them prudent therefore, that are precise in keeping Canonical hours of Prayer, as they call them, so they Pray to God alone, who alone knows their heart : and so they Pray *with the Spirit*, and *with the Understanding*, I Cor. 14. 15. that is, in a tongue wherein they know what they say, and understand the language wherein they vent the meditations of their Spirit. This was the milk that the Church of *England* gave every day out of her breasts, to praise God in Common-Prayer at set hours, before noon and after, in the assemblies of her devout children. How many
have

150 *Prayer is the great Instrument*

have rejoyced to hear the Chiming of the Bells to call them together, and would never miss their station? As *Peter* and *John* went together to the Temple at the hour of Prayer, being the ninth hour, *Acts* 3. 1. O when will these profane days come to an end, that we may again so orderly, so delightfully appear before the living God?

Of one thing the Devil disappointed us many years past in the time of Prayer, w^{ch} was the Night-offices of prayers, called *Vigils*, which are disused, because it was feared they grew incident to scandal and uncleannesse. And though they be left off (I believe for good reason) in a concourse of open meeting, yet let not God lose his tribute of Prayer, which should be paid him in the still and quiet opportunity of the night. The day is God's, and
the

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the night is God's, the darkness and light to him are both alike : let not so many hours, as run out from our lying down to our rising up again, pass away without any Prayer. Says David, *O Lord I remembered thee in my bed, and meditated on thee in the night-watches, Psalm 63. 6.* It seems, while the Tabernacle of Moses stood, that the Priests did some duties in it all night long. *Psalm 134. 1. Bless the Lord ye servants of the Lord, which by night stand in the house of the Lord.* The Apostles allowed widows must continue in Supplication and Prayers night and day, *1 Tim. 5. 5.* And Anna the widow-prophetess served God with Fasting and Prayers *night and day, Luke 2. 37.* The Lord hath foretold that he will come as a thief in the night at the great day, *2 Pet. 3. 10.* Therefore, O Lord, with my Soul will I desire thee in
the

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the night, and at midnight will I
think upon thee, and call unto
thee; that if it shall be this night,
even now, when Christ *Jesus* will
come to judge the world, my Soul
may find mercy from him, and
both Body and Soul may be glori-
fied, and so continue with him for
ever.

All this about the opportunity of
time shall shut up with one Instru-
ction of the *Psalmist*, *Psal.* 32. 6.
Every one that is Godly shall Pray un-
to thee, O Lord, in a time that thou
mayest be found. When you find
stirrings and impulsions more than
ordinary to provoke you to Pray-
er, follow the admonition of the
Spirit, and let not such a time slip.
You know not whether such a di-
vine presage may rowle in your
thoughts again. I make no questi-
on but there are some Critical mo-
ments,

ments, wherein God offers more than he will do again; if you neglect him when he courts you with so great advantage. But now change the case from mine to the whole Nations, from private to publick, then thus I will be peremptory in my resolution: There is no time too late for any Christian that lives, in his single person, to beseech God to be merciful to him: he may find the same propitioufness that the penitent thief did. But there may be a time too late to save a Kingdom, or a state from ruine, when the Lord hath decreed the period of it. Therefore when confusions threaten and begin to peep out, watch them betimes, and let the whole Land Pray for peace, and let the Governours prepare conditions for it, to avert publick calamitie. If we let tumults and conspiracies grow to a head, it will
be

154 *Prayer is the great, &c.*

be in vain to struggle by monthly or weekly humiliations, when our destiny is unavoidable. *Plutarch* says, that a discontented person challeng'd the Oracle of *Delphos* that it never gave a comfortable answer. That's your fault says the Oracle, for none of you come to me till your case is past help. *Venimus huc lapsis quæsitum oracula rebus*, says the Poet, that ever keeps *decorum* in his Verses. Therefore awake right early: seek the Lord in the first season, that the course of misery may not wax too strong and remediless. Otherwise the Prophet will say, *The days of visitation are come, the days of recompence are come, Israel shall know it, Hos. 9. 7.* and then whether will ye flie for help to be delivered. But prevent such dismal tribulations, while it is called To day. For nothing is more Consolatory than seasonable Supplication.



CHAP. V.

How the Sacraments minister to a Christian's Comfort. A general Survey of Sacraments. Five Reasons why God ordained Two Sacraments under the Gospel. What Comforts flow from the Grace of Baptism. What Comforts flow from the Lord's Supper.

THough by that which hitherto hath been set forth, I trust I may assume, that every one, that sets his heart to make use of it, hath drunk well, yet as the Ruler of the Feast said at the Marriage in *Cana of Galilee*, *I have kept the good*, that is, the best, *Wine until now*, Jo. 2. 10. The water of life

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life in *Baptism*, the wine that delighteth the Spiritual thirst in the *Lord's Supper*. Other things in the Word report unto us what a good land the Lord hath promised to his *Israel*: but these two Sacraments are *Caleb* and *Josuah*, spies that have seen, and searcht the land, and bring us sensible and sure tidings, that it is a noble land, flowing with Milk and Hony: by the Grapes which they have brought with them, and by their ocular and diligent survey, they yield evident testimony that God hath provided a gracious Country for us in the Kingdom of Heaven. To put all my work of Consolation into one prospect together, *Prayer*, the best comfortable Grace is married to *Hope*, the *Holy Ghost* gives it in marriage, *Faith* is the Priest that joyns them together; and the *two Sacraments* are the outward signs,
by

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by which they have declared their consent, as it were, by giving and receiving a Ring, and by joyning of hands.

First I will treat of *Sacraments* in general, then of each in particular by it self.

A Sacrament being a visible sign of inward grace, as a means whereby we receive the same, and a pledge to assure us thereof; or more at large, (which comprizeth the end of all such outward signs) a token to confirm mens Faith in the promises of God: observe first, That God hath condescended above all expression to our weakness, that He would have us to take notice of his mercies in gross and sensible things: A way that is framed to our level, and dull apprehension. For God is a Spirit, and they that worship him,

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him, must worship him in Spirit and Truth, Jo. 4. 24. that's, purely a Heavenly way. But some alterations have been admitted, to bring us forward in our own pace, that is, after humane and bodily fancies. *Deus quandoque infantilia loquitur.* For our sakes the Lord speaks in the Scriptures in a plain and vulgar *Emphasis*, strangely beneath his Infinite wisdom, as a nurse useth to babble to her Infant. So He is pleased to give himself to our hands, to our eyes, to our taste in common and obvious matter, but out of his surpassing wisdom, to make us more spiritual, by cloathing Religion in a bodily attire.

The Church began in innocency, and yet it began with a Sacrament; *the Tree of life*, instituted to keep mankind on Earth immortal by tasting it, if *Adam* had not ambitiously

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bitiously eaten of the Tree of knowledge.

When the old world was drowned, and repaired again, God told Noah, Gen. 9. *I do set my Bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a Covenant between me and the Earth; that the waters shall no more become a flood, to destroy all the Earth.* This is the World's Covenant, and not the Church's, a Covenant to save all the Earth from a total deluge. And God is to be perceived, and to be thought of in that sign, Ezek. 1. 28. *The glory of the Throne of God was as the appearance of the Bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain: this was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord: and so the same glory is figur'd in the Rainbow, Revel. 4. 3.*

After this, it being not discovered

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ed who did openly and entirely profess the worship of the true God ; *Abraham* was called out of *Chaldea*, and he and his family were imbodied into a Church, and received the sign of *Circumcision*, as a mark stamp't upon them, to be known to be those whom God had called out for his own, and did admonish them to circumcise the fore-skin of their heart, *Dent.* 10. 16. Chiefly to imprint into them that the promised seed should come from that stock, in whom all Nations should be blessed.

When *Abraham's* seed became a National Church, before they could get out of *Egypt*, the bloud of a *Lamb* was sprinkled upon their doors, with a statute given upon it, that from thenceforth every family at that time of the year should give account for a Lamb slain, and be

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be eaten within their houses, till *John Baptist's* Lamb was slain to take away the sin of the world.

Under the like discipline they were trained up for a while in the wilderness, when *Moses* set up the figure of a *Serpent* upon a Pole, that they might look upon it, and live that were stung by Serpents, *Numb. 21. verse 9.* The Author of the Book of *Wisdom* writes Divinely upon it, *That they might be admonisht for a small season it was a sign of Salvation, — And he that turned himself toward it, was not saved by the thing he saw, but by thee that art the Saviour of the world, Wisd. Chap. 16. Verses 6, 7.*

Neither are we such perfect men under the New Testament, to be taught only by the words of holiness and truth, but we are received
into

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into the Covenant of Grace, and preserved in it by Mysteries signifying wonderful things to our outward senses, that we may suck and be satisfied with the Churches *two breasts of Consolation*, Isa. 66. 11. And be filled with the *two golden pipes*, that empty the golden oil out of themselves, Zach. 4. 12.

I stand upon the number of *Two*, because they are put together, 1 Cor. 10. 3. *The Israelites were all baptized in the cloud, did all eat the same spiritual meat, and all drank of the same spiritual drink.* As good account for it is, 1 Cor. 12. 13. *By one spirit we are all baptized into one body, and have been all made to drink into one spirit.* Or learn it from St. John 1 Epist. 5. 6. *Christ came not by water alone, but by water and blood — And there are three that bear witness, the spirit, that is,*
the

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the ministry of the Gospel; *the water*, that is *Baptism*; and *the blond*, that is the Lord's Supper. I will not promise a precise testimony out of Antiquity, which shall say there are but two Sacraments under the Gospel, and no more; but learned men have produced out of the Fathers as much as amounts unto it, to them that will not be contentious. *Justin Martyr* 2. *Apol.* to the Emperor speaks of these Two marks, or professed signs of Christianity, and no other. *Tertullian* against *Marcion*, lib. 3. c. 51. bring them that are married to Baptism, and the Lords Supper. *St. Cyprian* lib. 2. Ep. 1. to *Stephen*, Then they are sanctified, when they are born again by both Sacraments. *St. Cyril* and *St. Ambrose* writing purposely of Sacraments, speak but of Two. *St. Austin* Ep. 118. to *Januarius*, Christ hath subjected us to a
I light

light yoke, to Sacraments of the smallest number, easie in observation, excellent in dignity; Baptism in the Name of the Holy Trinity, and the Communion of Christs Body and Bloud; and if any thing else be commanded in Scripture. And many allude to that number from *Cant. 4. 5. Thy breasts are like two young Roes that are twins.* Here is a brief survey, how God in all Ages hath Communicated with us in Sacraments.

May the reason of it be discovered? nay, *Who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his Counsellor, Rom. 11. 34.* Yet it is no trespass against the sobriety of wisdom to ask, why Christian Religion depends so much upon visible Sacraments?

1. First, it is to give Faith a third manner

manner of corroboration : and a threefold cord is not easily broken. First God hath promised us all blessings in Christ : Secondly, he gave an Oath for it unto *Abraham* ; *that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lye, we might have a strong consolation, Heb. 6. 18.* Thirdly, after He had plighted both Oath and Promise, he hath given us holy Signs to confirm it. When God had both promised, and sworn, durst we of our selves have askt a Sign to confirm it, to make us more believing ? No truly, we durst not : for an evil, and an adulterous generation seeketh after a Sign : It were a great blemish in Faith, if we should appoint God to lend us a crutch to lean upon. But God hath prevented us herein ; and, as we say in the Common-Prayer, *That which for our unworthiness we durst not*
I 2 ask,

ask, He hath supplied of his own accord, and hath instituted Sacred Signs, wrapt up in the Creatures, of most ordinary use, to make it more easie to lay hold of the Hope that is set before us.

2. Secondly, Every great deliverance in Gods Book, was accompanied with some outward Sign, to make it more comfortable upon so remarkable an impression. As *Moses* being appointed to be the Captain to lead *Israel* out of *Aegypt*, was bade to cast his Rod before the People, and to let it turn into a Serpent, and return into a Rod again: to make his hand leprous and whole again in an instant, by putting it into his bosom, and by drawing it out. And *Moses* shewed these Signs in the sight of the People, and they believed, *Exod.* 4. 31. It would be tedious to recite the

Two Sacraments: 167

the stories of *Aſa*, *Hezekiah*, *Joſh*, &c. theſe were perſwaded by the Signs of God, that he would viſit them with a mighty deliverance. But there is no deliverance like unto that, which is brought to paſs for us through the Death and bloody Paſſion of Chriſt. And the two Sacraments are the Remonſtrance of that great Salvation, which hath ſet us free out of the hands of all our enemies.

3. Thirdly, It is meet that great benefits ſhould be faſtned to our memories by a ſure Nail. Therefore God, diſtrusting mans memory represents his greateſt works of mercy in the Ordinances of manifeſt Signs to prevent forgetfulneſs. The help of ſome outward mark doth avail by experience, to bring that to mind, that elſe would have ſlipt away. As upon occaſion we

use to tye a thred about our fingers, or to unloose the gemmal of a Ring to make us mindful of a promise, or some weighty business.

4. Fourthly, though all our worship must hold its tenure, as it were *in capite*, from the Spirit, if we hope to have it acceptable to God, yet we are better capable of such worship by the opportunity of material conveyances. Only Angels and Blessed Souls in Heaven can serve God in the pure and immaterial zeal of their mind. But while we are cloathed with flesh, the mind receives all it takes in from bodily objects: and which passeth in by the pipes of the senses, it is connatural to us to apprehend it with more tenacity and fasthold.

Finally, As Christ descended in-
to

to the womb of his Mother, and to walk with us upon Earth ; so God hath vouchsafed to offer his Word and Promise to us in the Creatures of the Earth : setting a Seal unto the Word, which makes the Patent very valid, and of force and comfort. For if a Commandment of promise were remarkable, that of honouring our Parents, the first Commandment of promise in the second Table, *Ephes.* 6. 2. much more is a Seal and Sacrament of promise remarkable. Doubt not then, but as Faith is our hand to receive Christ, so the Sacraments are, as it were, God's hands to give Him unto us.

Being past the general Survey of visible Sacraments, it is time to enter into the consideration of Baptism. Which God hath exalted to marvellous Vertue and Consolati-

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on by his Omnipotent appointment. The *Jews*, that first received it, will teach us, that they expected this New and Gracious Ceremony upon the coming of Christ. For *Jo. 1. 25. The Priests and Levites sent to ask John, why Baptizest thou if thou be not the Christ? &c.* It seems they had a Tradition, that *Baptism* should come into the Church with the *Messias* : which they learnt, as I take it, from two of the Prophets. *Isa. 4.* states out a famous praise of Christs Kingdom, then it brings in this, *Verse 3. In that day shall the branch of the Lord be beautiful and glorious — When the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Sion, and shall have purged the bloud of Jerusalem from the midst thereof.* The other place is *Ezek. 36.* a plain prophesie of Christs Kingdom, and *Verse 25.* he thus describes it, *Then will I*
sprinkle

sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be cleansed from all your filthiness. John made way unto this Sacrament, and it came from Heaven: therefore the Pharisees rejected the counsel of God, being not Baptized of John, Luke 7. 30. But in the fulness of the Gospel Christ confirm'd it. For he that made the promise, was the only able person to set the Seal to ratifie it. Except his admired doctrine, and his miracles, all things else about Christ did make no shew to outward appearance: so he would go no higher in the institution of an outward Sign of cleansing and regeneration, than to bring the people to a River to be washt, or to a Vessel of water to be sprinkled. For Faith is drawn through these narrow and abject means, that like himself have no comeliness *in specie*; and when we see them, there is no comeli-

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ness that we should desire them,
Isa. 53. 2.

Nevertheless it is fit we should be well taught in the Contemplation of the hidden vertue inclosed in *Baptism*, or else we could never think it worth our labour and obedience. Our Common-Prayer-Book (a store-house of rare Divinity) tells us what is to be expected at that Laver, for them that come to be Baptized.

1. That God hath promised to be the Father of the faithful and of their seed, and will most surely perform, and keep his promise with them: and by this introduction we are incorporated into the holy Congregation. Behold, they whom we love above all others by nature, our Children, are naturalized to be the Citizens of the Heav-
venly

the Sacrament of Baptism. 173

venly Kingdom, and enter into it through this door of Grace.

2. Secondly, As God did save *Noah* and his Family from perishing by water, and safely led the Children of *Israel* through the Red Sea, while their enemies were drowned: so the millions of the Nations whom God hath not given to Christ for his inheritance, are drowned in their own lusts and corruptions. But O what a priviledge it is, to be among those few that are received into the Ark of Christs Church, to be exempted from the common deluge, and to be the faithful seed of *Abraham*, led through the Channel of the Sea, and Baptized in the Cloud, that went along with them, when the Armies of the mighty are mightily consumed?

3. Thirdly, We may gather out
of

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of our Church-office for Baptism,
that the everlasting benediction of
Heavenly washing affords two
Comforts : it signifies the blood of
Christ to cleanse us *Per modum pre-*
tii, as the price that was paid to
ransom us from death : and the san-
ctifying of the Holy Spirit to
cleanse us, *per modum habitûs*, by
his In-being, and Celestial infusion ;
and both are put together in one
Collect, *That all that are Baptized*
may receive remission of sins by spiri-
tual regeneration. There is no re-
mission of sin without blood, says
the Apostle, *Heb. 9. 22.* meaning
the invaluable blood of the Lamb
of God, *Verse 14.* And the Hea-
venly thing is represented by the
visible Element of Water : (for
there must be some aptitude be-
tween the Sign and the Thing sig-
nified, else it were not a Sacra-
ment) that as Water washeth away
the

the Sacrament of Baptism. 175

the filth of the body, so the Blood of Christ delivereth our Souls from the guilt and damnableness of sin. *The Blood of Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin, 1 Epist. Jo. 1. 7.* The metaphor of cleansing must have respect to Baptismal-water. Again, *Who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his Blood, Revel. 1. 5.* Where the Scripture speaks of washing from sin, it must be taken from the water of Baptism, figuring the vertue of Christs Blood, that in the sight of his Father makes us white as Snow. The Scriptures indeed strike most upon the other string, and more directly, as *Ephes. 5. 25. Christ loved the Church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctifie, and cleanse it with the washing of water, by the Word. Titus 3. 6. He saved us by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost. And in many other*

176 *What Comforts flow from*
other places. Therefore our Li-
turgy falls most upon the *purifying*
operation of the Spirit, to be shadow-
ed in the outward washing of wa-
ter. As when it prays, *Send thy*
Holy Spirit to these Infants, and
grant that they may be Baptiz'd with
Water and with the Holy Ghost—
And, *Grant that all that are Bapti-*
zed, may receive the fulness of thy
Grace. Spiritual Regeneration is
that which the Gospel hath set forth
to be the principal correlative of
Baptism. O happy it is for us to
be born again by Water and the
Holy Ghost! For better it were
never to be born, than not to be
born twice.

God put a good mind into us,
and reform one great fault in us;
which is, that our Baptism being
past over a great while ago, we
cast it out of our memory, and
meditate

the Sacrament of Baptism. 177

meditate but little upon the benefits and comforts of it. We are got into the Church, and do in a sort forget how we got in. Whereas the whole life of a Christian man and woman should be a continual reflection how in Baptism we entred into Covenant with Christ, to believe in him, to serve him, to forsake the Devil, the vanities of the world, and the sinful desires of the flesh. *Water* is a pellucid Element to look through it to the bottom : So look often through the sanctified Water, to see what Christ hath done for you, and what you have engaged to do for Christ. And there is no heart so full of blackness and melancholy, but will recover upon it, and be as fresh in sound health, as if it were filled with marrow, and fatness. Well did *St. Paul* put *Baptism* among the principles and foundations of Christian

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stian doctrine, *Heb. 6. 2.* For all the weight of Faith, Sanctification, and Mercy doth lie upon it. Recount this by particulars.

1: The first thought that my Soul hath upon it is, That I am no longer a stranger and foreigner, but a fellow-Citizen with the Saints, and of the household of God, *Ephes. 2: 19.* I am no more a-far off, but made nigh by the Bloud of Christ, partaker of the priviledges of the Church, and called by the new Name, which the mouth of the Lord shall name, a Christian, *Isa. Chap. 62. Verse 2.*

2. Secondly, I find that I have gained to have the highest point of Faith unfolded to me, which was but darkly discerned in the Old Testament, to confess the Holy Trinity, in which Faith I was Baptized.

tized. For because that mystery was revealed at Christs Baptism, it goes ever along with this Sacrament. All Nations being Baptized in the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

3. Thirdly, I observe that my Christian engagement allows me not the liberty of sinning after the custom of the world; but obligeth me to the strict discipline of my Lord, to live holily, justly and soberly, to walk in newness of life, as planted into the likeness of Christs death, so to die unto sin: for *he that is dead, is freed from sin, Rom. 6. 7.* In every thing, and at all times I must remember what the Sureties at the Font, called Godfathers and Godmothers, did promise for me in my Name; which the Liturgy of *Geneva* retains in these words, *Do you promise to warn
this*

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this Child to live according to God's
Word, and make the Law of God the
square of his life to live by? 'Tis a
binding Ceremony, and we are
brought up from our tender years
in the knowledge of it, that we
continually may feel the work of
the Ordinance, to have our hearts
sprinkled from an evil Conscience,
and our bodies washt with clean
Water, Heb. 10. 21, 22. And as
many as are Baptized into Christ,
have put on Christ, Gal. 3. 27. To
put on Christ is to follow Christ in
the Law of a new Creature, and to
perfect holiness; without which no
man shall see God.*

4. Fourthly, I have assurance
that the Spirit is not disjoyned from
the Water: for Christs Word can-
not fail, that we shall be Baptized
with the Holy Ghost. *But ye are
washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye
are*

the Sacrament of Baptism. 181

are justified in the Name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God, 1 Cor. 6. 11. The power given to keep the Covenant makes it a Covenant of Grace: else we shall administer but the Letter, and not the Spirit. The outward act of man, unless we make our selves unworthy, is certainly assisted with the increase of God. If the good effect ensue not, the Sacrament doth not want its vertue, but the receiver marr'd it. Very much is to be ascribed to the Word preach't: it is a powerful means to convert us, and to save us. 1 Tim. 4. 15. Take heed unto thy doctrine, for in doing this thou shalt save thy self, and them that hear thee. And 1 Pet. 1. 23. Being born again not of corruptible seed, but incorruptible, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth in you. The Word disposeth, and prepares: God is the efficient cause of

182 *What Comforts flow from*

of our Regeneration. Now this Sacrament, whether we speak of Infants, they are to call to mind how they received the outward Seal of Grace; or whether we speak of Converts of ripe years, who at the same time were taught the vertue of it, it hath reason to work more powerfully and effectually upon their knowledge and affections, than doctrine alone: because Christ and his Benefits are manifested in a sensible operation, which himself did dignifie in his own person at the waters of *Jordan*, and afterward institute it to be used by all his Disciples.

5. The fifth thing that I draw from hence gives me exceeding Consolation in Christ, that no man who is made the Child of God is in the damnable state of sin; therefore in *Baptism*, being made the adopted Child

the Sacrament of Baptism. 183

Child of God, I have obtained the pardon of all sins, Original and Actual : as *Naaman* was cured of all his leprosie. *Who saved us by the washing of Regeneration*, Tit. 3. 6. *Be Baptized every one of you, in the Name of the Lord Jesus, for the remission of sins*, Acts 2. 38: So *Ananias* said to *Paul*, Acts 22. 16. *Arise, and be Baptized, and wash away thy sins.* Yea, but some will cavil, Infants have not Faith; and God hath set forth Christ to be a propitiation through Faith in his Bloud: and he that believeth and is Baptized, shall be saved, *Mark* 16. 16. I will not contend about it, whether Baptized Infants have a secret imperceptible habit of Faith: I am sure there is Innocency of life in them instead of Faith. They that are of Age to come to the knowledge of Faith, must bring their own Faith with them to the Font :

184 *What Comforts flow from*

Font: but for Infants, they have priviledge to be in Church-communion, by the Faith of the Church, wherein they were born. There is another contest made by some, that, notwithstanding Baptism, Original sin remains in us all the days of our life. True: the sin is not blotted out in the Infant, but it is blotted out of the Book of God. And as Actual sins are pardon'd for Christ's sake, yet it cannot be brought about that they should never be done, which are done and past, but it is enough that they shall not be imputed: so Original sin cleaves unto us, it is not cast out, for I feel it in me; but it is remitted.

6. For the complement of this subject, the largest and the longest Comfort flowing from the Grace of Baptism is, That we are to rely upon

the Sacrament of Baptism. 185

on the Covenant, made between God and us therein, for the remission of all our sins, which we commit after Baptism unto the end of our life. Far be it from me to say, that it sufficeth us to cast our eyes back to the Covenant then made, as if the bare and historical memory of it did suffice to blot out sins; that's but an empty flash, and a vapour of presumption. But this I say, Build upon the Eternity and Infallibility of God's Truth: and then by a true and sure-grasping Faith, joyn'd with Repentance, renew your self in God's mercies by the promise of the Old Baptismal Covenant. Repentance is a condition never to be omitted to lift us up again, when we have been overtaken with sins. But Faith doth not comfort it self in the sincerity of Repentance, which in us is ever imperfect, but in Christ's
merits

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merits once for all consigned to us in Baptism. For the Scriptures speak indefinitely, that the Laver of Regeneration purgeth away all our sins ; it doth not speak restrictively of sins past, as if it did operate no longer than in that moment, when the water is sprinkled. For Baptism doth now, at the very present time save us, 1 Pet. 3. 21. And some collect it out of that figurative place, *Ezek. 49. 9. Every thing where the Waters do come, shall live.* After a shower of rain is fallen, and ceaseth, the grasse continues to grow. By grievous and presumptuous sins we debar our selves from the sense, and comfort of the Covenant for the present : yet when we repent, we come not to make a new Covenant with God, but to beseech him to be gracious to us for the old Covenants sake. As an Adulteress, if she be received again,
and

Of the Two Sacraments. 187

and pardon'd by her Husband, is not new married, but accepted for a wife upon the first contract of marriage.

Take some examples of those in the New Testament, that sinned against God, and in their return again, did not suppose the first Covenant of Baptism to be abolisht, but they comforted themselves that the mercies promised then would hold firm, and not fail them. St. Paul challengeth the *Corinthians*, Chap. 6. Epist. 1. that they had been Adulterers, Effeminate, and much of the like. Yet Verse 11. he speaks thus to them, *Ye are washed, sanctified, justified in the Name of the Lord Jesus.* In the same manner he deals with the *Galatians*, who had embraced much false doctrine, mingled *Judaism* with the Gospel; yet Chap. 3. Verse 27.

K

As

188 *What Comforts flow from the*

As many of you as are Baptized into Christ, have put on Christ. Can any thing equal all these heart-refreshings that swim in the pool of Baptism? Therefore in many Ages past, the joy of the Neophytes was excessive that came to be Baptized. Many Torches were lighted, and carried before them; to shew it was the day of their illumination. They came in white garments, and wore them constantly eight days together, a most Festival habit. Yet they affected too much to defer their Baptism till their elder, nay their latest years, out of the erroneous principle, that Baptism was the healing water for the remission of sins past: and they rather relied upon Repentance, than upon the Baptism, which they had received, for the remission of sins that did follow. Whereas Repentance is not a new paction with God,

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God, but a return to the use of the old : a restitution as it were to our blood, when we had been tainted by committing Treason against God ; that is, repossession of mercy endanger'd to be forfeited. But were it a new Covenant, we should have some new visible Sign for it, which never was. Therefore this is the very Soul of mine and every ones Baptismal Consolation, that being once done, it Seals pardon for all our sins through Christ's blood unto our lifes end.

BUT as if many Spouts should open into one Cistern, so all Comforts conspire to meet in the Sacrament of the *Lord's Supper*. Nothing else but the actual enjoying of Heaven is above it. The Church, which dispenseth all the mysteries of salvation, can bring
K 2 forth

190 *What Comforts flow from the*
forth no better. Children that are
come to Age, can ask no more than
the whole portion of their Father's
goods that come unto them: and
what is that but the Bloud of
Christ? and this is *the New Testa-*
ment in that Bloud. Christ is mine,
his Body is mine, his Bloud is mine,
all is mine. O be glad and rejoyce,
and give honour to the Lord God
Omnipotent, for the marriage of the
Lamb is come, Revel. 19. 7. And
the Spirit saith, write, *Blessed are*
they that are called to the marriage-
supper of the Lamb, Verse 9. It is
much to be received into a Cove-
nant with God by the former Sa-
crament: is it not more to be kept
in Covenant by the other? It is
much in Baptism to be brought
from death to life: but what is life
without nourishment to preserve
it? This keeps us in the Lease of
the old Covenant, that the Years
of

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of it shall never run out, and expire. This is food to keep us in health and strength, that we never decay and faint. By it we lay hold of the promise, *Isa. 54. 10. My kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the Covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee.* Then why should I not embolden my heart with holy security against all fears; for the Lord hath put himself into my hand, and into my mouth, and into my Spirit: of what then should I be afraid? This is that courage which our Liturgy sounds forth, as with a shrill Trumpet, to all that come to this Banquet well prepared: It begins, that it is a comfortable thing to all them that receive it worthily; it bids us come with a full trust in Gods mercy, and with a quiet Conscience: it proclaims aloud, Hear what comfortable

K. 3. words

192 *What Comforts flow from the*
words our Saviour Christ saith un-
to all that truly come unto him, *So*
God loved the world, &c. Come un-
to me all ye, &c. This is a true say-
ing, &c. It hath gathered the Sal-
lies of spiritual joy, as it were, in-
to a bundle of Myrrhe. It adds,
Christ hath instituted and ordained
holy mysteries, as pledges of his love,
and for a continual remembrance of
his death, to our great and endless
comfort. And if all this put toge-
ther will not blandish our Consci-
ence, and stablish our joy, we
would be dull and spirit-broken,
though an Angel from Heaven
should come and say unto us, as he
did unto Gideon, *The Lord is with*
thee, thou mighty man of valour,
Jud. 6. 12. For an Angel of the
Lord cannot plead so much to the
solace of the heart, as the great
Angel of the Covenant hath done
in these great demonstrations of
love, as followeth. 1. First,

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I. First, As Baptism was the former, so this is the second visible publication of God's apparent mercy. It is not a bare message, but a lively apprehension of them by palpable means: not in a vision, or a dream, but in a real Object. Call to mind that the Lord was angry with *Solomon*, because his heart was turned from the Lord God of *Israel*, who had appeared unto him *twice*, *1 Kings* 11. 39. Once the Lord hath appeared unto us in the token of his love by *Water*: and *once again* he appears unto us in the Elements of his *Holy Table*. *Twice* he hath appeared to bless thee. Therefore *eat thy Bread with joy, and drink thy Wine with a merry heart*, *Eccles.* 9. 7. For if you turn away from Comfort, when the Lord hath appeared *twice* unto you to give it you, he will be angry, and leave you to a thick darkness

194 *What Comforts flow from the*
of sorrow, such as fell upon the
land of *Ægypt*.

2. Secondly, The Lord can appear Comfortably unto us, though with a Sword in his hand, and in the midst of a Camp, as he did to *Josuah*, *Jos. 5. 13*. Or in a flame of fire, as he did to *Manoah*, *Jud. 13. 20*. Or in a tempest upon the Sea, as he did to the Apostles, *Matth. 14. 27*. Or at the Graves mouth, as he did to *Mary Magdalen*, *Jo. 20. 14*. But here he appears unto us in a Feast, which is a time of innocent delight. The glory of God, which we look for, is set out unto us in that which our senses apprehend for sweetness and pleasure: as *Luke 22. 29*. *I appoint unto you a Kingdom — that ye may Eat and Drink at my Table in my Kingdom:* which is translated from bodily pleasure to spiritual, that in the
Heaven

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Heaven of blessedness the Soul shall feed continually as at a Banquet : of which we have now a taste in the Kingly provision of Christs Supper. It is a *Kingly Feast*, although imparted in a little pittance of Bread and Wine : yet it is more costly and precious in that which it signifies, than *Solomon* and all his Court had for their diet day by day, *1 Kings 4. 22.* We are brought to Eat at the King's Table, as *Mephibosheth* was, like one of the Kings Sons, *2 Sam. 9. 11.* To Eat together is a Communion of more than ordinary acquaintance : do you note the endearing favour of God in that ? And what are we, that are not thrust, as our kind might look for it, to gather up Crums under the Board, but to Eat our portion before the Lord, with the Lord, out of the hands of the Lord ? For he that brake Bread,

196 *What Comforts flow from the*
and gave it to the Apostles, gives
it to Us, as our High Priest, though
he be in Heaven. I exhort you
therefore to enter into the Guest-
chamber with a quiet, and unsha-
ken heart: for the Lord hath not
invited us as *Absalom* did *Amnon*,
to kill us: nor as *Esther* did *Ha-*
man, to accuse us; but as *Melchi-*
sedeck brought forth Bread and
Wine to *Abraham* to bless us. He
gives us *Asaph's* portion, Bread
that shall be fat, and Royal dain-
ties, *Gen. 49. 20.* Only the case is
alter'd, if Christ shall say, the hand
of him that betrays me, the hand of
him that loves me not, the hand of
him that believes not in me, the
hand of him that will not keep my
sayings, is on the Table. That
wretch shall be thrown out, and be
fed with Bread of sorrow, and Wa-
ter of affliction, nay, where there
shall not be a drop of Water to cool
his Tongue.

3. Third-

3. Thirdly, That which astonisheth the Communicant, and ravisheth his heart is, that this Feast affords no worse meat than the Body and Bloud of our Saviour. Those he gave for the life of the world, these are the repast of this Supper, and these we truly partake. For there is not only the visible reception of the outward Signs, but an invisible reception of the thing signified. There is far more than a shadow, than a type, than a figure. Christ did not only propose a Sign at that hour, but also he gave us a Gift, and that Gift really and effectually is Himself, which is all one as you would say, Spiritually himself: for *Spiritual Union* is the most true, and real union that can be. That which is promised, and Faith takes it, and hath it, is not fiction, fanſie, opinion,

198 *What Comforts flow from the*
nion, falsity, but substance and ve-
rity. Being strengthened with po-
wer by the Spirit in the inward
mind, Christ dwelleth in our hearts
by Faith, *Ephes. 3. 17.* As by a
Ring, or a meaner instrument of
conveyance, a man may be settled
in Land, or put into an Office:
and by such conveyances the Rati-
fication of such Grants are held to
be real. How much more real is
the gift and receipt of Christ's Body
and Bloud, when conveyed unto us
by the confirmation of the Eternal
Spirit? For observe, it is the same
Spirit that is in Christ, and that is
in Us, and we are quickned by one
and the same Spirit, *Rom. 8. 11.*
Therefore it cannot chuse, but that
a real Union must follow between
Christ and Us: as there is a Union
between all the parts of a Body,
by the animation of one Soul. But
Faith is the mouth wherewith we
Eat

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Eat his Body, and Drink his Bloud; not the mouth of a man, but of a Faithful man: for we hunger after him, not with a Corporal appetite, but a Spiritual; therefore our Eating must be Spiritual, and not Corporal. Yet this is a real, a substantial partaking of Christ crucified, broken, his flesh bleeding, his wounds gaping: so he is exhibited, so we are sure we receive him, which doth not only touch our outward senses in the Elements, but pass through into the depth of the Soul. For in true Divinity *real* and *spiritual* are æquipollent: although with the *Papists* nothing is *real* unless it be *corporal*: which is a gross way, to defraud us of the Sublime and Soul-ravishing vertue of the mystery. A mystery neither to be set out in words, nor to be comprehended sufficiently in the mind, but to be adored with Faith,
says

200 *What Comforts flow from the*
says Calvin, lib. Instit. c. 17. sect.
5. But herein we pledge Christ in
the Cup of love, herein we renew
the Covenant of forgiveness strong-
ly assured by the sprinkling of
Bloud: the life is in the Bloud:
and without shedding of Bloud is no
remission of sins. Because death
is the wages of sin. Sin is the great-
est dishonour that can be done to
God: and death in Christ's person
is the greatest satisfaction that can
be made. He died, and gave him-
self for me: he died and gave him-
self to me, as he was dead in his
gored and pierced body, that his
sacrifice might be in me, and in
all those that are redeemed by it.
We read of some Mothers, that in
a great famine have eaten their own
Children, 2 Kings 6. but what Mo-
ther in the time of famine did ever
give her own flesh to save the life
of her Child? But Christ hath gi-
ven

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ven himself for us, that we might
not perish. " O Lord, I owe all
" my life to thee, because thou hast
" laid down thy life for me. O let
" me bleed out my sins, that thy
" Bloud may fill all the veins of my
" Spirit. O let my Body be trans-
" figur'd to be Heavenly by clean-
" ness and chastity, by being used
" only for thy worship and service,
" that the Body of my Saviour may
" come under the roof of it. Then
" when the King shall set forth his
" Table, and give himself to me in
" his wonderful Feast, my Spick-
" nard shall send forth a sweet smell,
" *Cant. I. 12. My Soul shall magnifie*
" *the Lord, and my spirit shall re-*
" *joyce in Christ my Saviour.*

We have found the Messias, says
Philip to Nathaniel: And where
have we found him? at a Feast:
a Feast of his own Body and Bloud,
but

202 *What Comforts flow from the*

but set out with no more cost and shew than a piece of Bread, and a sip of Wine. In this manner it is brought to pass by the Omnipotency of God's pleasure to institute it, with the efficacy of a strong Faith concurring to receive it. The Church had done very ill, if of its own head it had made so mean a representation of Christ: but the Lord must be obeyed, and ought to be admired in the humility of his Ordinance, who hath not given us rich Viands, and full Cups, but made the Feast out of the fragments of the meanest Creatures. Let them understand this that will make themselves fit to be his guests, bring a preparation of humility suitable to the exility of those oblations. *The meek shall Eat and be satisfied, they shall praise the Lord and seek him, Psalm 22. 26.* And at that season let the riotous remember

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ber his fulness of Bread, and excess of Wine. God is honour'd in a little, and his liberality is abused in the excess of his creatures. And it is worth the noting, that the Elements, which we are invited to take, are of fruits that grow out of the Earth; to shew that the Earth, which was cursed for *Adam's* sake, is blessed for *Christ's* sake. As it brings forth Thorns and Thistles to call to mind our rebellion, so it brings forth Bread and Wine to call to mind our redemption. Neither doth God supply us with Bread only out of the furrows of the Earth; but sometime it hath fallen out of the clouds of Heaven. Behold, says God, *I will rain Bread from Heaven for you, Exod. 16. 4.* This was *Manna*, called *the Corn of Heaven, Psalm 78. 24.* This was the Spiritual meat, or Angels food, in which the old believers in the Wilderness

204 *What Comforts flow from the*
darkness did Eat Christ with an im-
plicit Faith. Our outward Sign is
the Bread of the Earth, true Bread
that grows in the Fields, yet the
Bread signified is that which the
Father hath given us from Hea-
ven, Jo. 6. 31. Bread is a great
part of mans nourishment; so
Christ crucified is the sole refection
of Faith. Bread is champed in the
mouth to make it fit for the sto-
mach: so the Body of Christ was
ordained to be slain, before it
could profit us. *If the Corn of
Wheat fall not into the ground and
die, it abideth alone; but if it die,
it bringeth forth much fruit, Jo. 12.*
24. By his life we learn to live, and
by his death we are made alive.
Bread when it is grounded between
our teeth, and eaten, is turn'd by
concoction into the substance of
our Body: which explains our
mystical union with Christ, that we
are

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are made one Spirit with him by Faith, as this sensible food is converted into our flesh and bone.

Beside, in the several parts of the outward Signs, it is God's meaning we should conceive how he loves the gathering together of many into one: which is thus to be qualified. At a common Supper, or any Meal, all that are at the Board feed of the same Meats; yet every one feeds to himself, and to none beside: So every Communicant Eats Christ to himself, and the just shall live by his own Faith. Nevertheless it is a Sacrament to combine, and to knit together, holding us fast into one Communion, that there may be no breaking asunder of the parts and members. Many grains of Wheat are kneaded into one Loaf, many Grapes are trodden, that their liquor may be pressed

206 *What Comforts flow from the*
fed into one cup. *We being many*
are one Bread, and one Body: for we
are all partakers of that one Bread,
1 Cor. 10. 17. Now natural learning will teach us, what a Comfort there is in Union, and that factions and dissolutions are painful and grievous. Behold, how good and pleasant a thing it is ! behold, what a strengthening to the mystical Body to continue in one fellowship and breaking of Bread, to link Faith and Love together in *Jesua* Christ ! It was but one deliverance common to all *Israel*, whose solemnity was kept at the Passeeover, though every Lamb was Eaten by it self in a several family : So it is one Cup of salvation which God hath given us to Drink, though distributed to the faithful according to the multitude of persons : and it is one Bread of which all do Eat, though some have one share of it,
and

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and some another. It is necessary that many pieces be broken off from one Loaf, to typifie the Body of the Lord broken for us, and that the benefits of his Passion are distributed among us.

There are many instances that are pregnant to prove, how pieces of something broken, and divided into many shares do import a Communication of somewhat among the dividers. The Heathen, at the making of a League, did now and then break a Flint-stone into pieces; and they that entred into a League kept the parts in token of a Covenant. Some upon a contract of marriage will break a piece of Gold, and the two halves are reserved by the contractors. Shall I go further, and yet come nearer to our case? The *Roman* Souldiers parted our Saviour's garment among

208 *What Comforts flow from the*
among them, and in that Symboli-
cal accident is shewn, that the *Gentiles* should share in the satisfaction
of his death. So *Peter* takes this
morsel of the Bread, *John* another,
&c. yet Christ is not divided. The
same Ticket, as it were, in words
in substance is put into every hand,
on which is written, *Take and Eat*
it in remembrance of me.

Take it, says Christ, and be not
afraid, as *Saul* was, to take a King-
dom, since Christ hath appointed
it: be not afraid, as *David* was,
to be the Kings Son, since such ho-
nour is predestinated to thee.
Take it, and fear not, as *Peter* did,
saying, *Depart from me, Lord, for*
I am a sinful man; it is the Lord's
delight to seek and to save that
which is lost. Take it, and take
heed you let not go your hold;
the thing is fast and firm, if you do
not

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not let it go, and lose it. Take it, but not to hold the pleasures of the world, and your sinful lusts in your gripe together: if your hands be full of those things, you can never hold this. Take it, and take Christ with it: for He that made the Testament in his Bloud, hath set the Seal unto the Testament, which gives you interests and possession of the Redemption by his Bloud. Take it, and reach out your hand, to signifie that you receive Christ with the hand of Faith. They are too nice, for fear of I know not what in the *Roman Church*, of losing a crum, or so forth, that they put the Body of Christ into the mouth of their Disciples: and in pretence that they give it as a Mother doth her breast into the mouth of her Child: whereas we receive this Sacrament, not as Babes, but as those that are
grown

210 *What Comforts flow from the*
grown to the measure of a good
Age. And if we be not worthy to
take it into our hands, we are not
worthy to receive it in our mouth.
Take it, and eat it : for it is not
enough to be sprinkled without,
but to feed on Christ, and to digest
him within. If upon the supply of
Corn, and Beasts, and Cattel, *Paul*
might say, that *God had filled our*
hearts with food and gladness, Acts
14. 17. If we are glad of that
which sustains us for a time, and
yet we must die : How glad will
we be to Eat of that, as will give
us such a life, that will endure for
ever ? Eat of the forbidden Tree,
says the Serpent to *Eve*, and you
shall not die ; but he lied unto her.
Therefore to dissolve the works of
the Devil, our Saviour hath ap-
pointed that which we shall Eat,
and assured the promise of Everlast-
ing life unto it. Eat as *Jonathan*
did

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did of the Hony-comb, that you may be lusty to pursue your enemies; and though Satan hath sworn your death, as *Saul* did *Jonathan's*, *1 Sam.* 14. 44. the Lord will deliver you. Pine not away with the consumption of an evil Conscience; but Eat, and be strong in the Lord, and in his mercy. As the Spirit of the *Aegyptian*, who was half dead, came to him again, when he had Eaten a little, *1 Sam.* 30. 12. Eat, and grind the Bread between your teeth, to shew the Lord's death. For Christ could have said, *This is my Body slain, This is my Body crucified*, but he had rather say, *This is my Body broken for you*, to shew the great injuries of his sufferings. Eat then, and remember you Eat the Body as it was broken, and remember that you Drink the blood as it flowed out of his wounds.

L

To

To keep these things in remembrance is the great design of the sacrament: an object which keeps the fancy of the Soul waking, that otherwise, it may be, would fall asleep. In the sixth of *St. John* Christ Preacheth over and over of *Eating his Flesh*, and *Drinking his Blood* without a Sacrament, by the power of Faith. But to keep it in fresh and frequent meditation, the Lord hath given us a palpable and signal token, as if he would engrave it upon the palms of our hands, and upon the roof of our mouth, upon the membranes of our brain, and upon the foreskin of our heart. This is a blessing twice, and twenty times given, because it is given that it may never be forgotten. They that love others, would live in the memory of those they love: it is because
Christ

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Christ loves us entirely, that he would be remembered of us. And no friend will say to another, Remember me when I am gone, but that he means reciprocally to remember his friend, to whom he spake it. If you will remember Christ, he will remember you. And the Thief on the Cross will teach you, that it is good to continue in his memory; Lord, remember me when thou com'st into thy Kingdom. O blessed Christ! thou art good, and dost good: thou hast not only provided an invaluable benefit for thy Church, but dost put it into our hands, that we may not lose it; and dost bring it into our eyes by clear ostension, that we may not forget it. We are apt to remember injuries, and to forget benefits: unthankfulness will undo us, if we take not heed of it.

214 *What Comforts flow from the*
it. O rub over your memory,
and consider the noble works of
the Lord, especially this great
work, how he suffered for us unto
Death. Remember seriously this
one thing as you ought, and God
will let you forget nothing that will
do you good. There is no grie-
vous sin which we incur, but for
the present Christ is forgotten, as
if he had never come to charge us
to keep our selves unspotted from
the world. But look upon his
wounds which bleed for our trans-
gressions, and it will stanch the
flux of sin, and make our hearts
bleed, because we have forgotten
obedience. In our distresses, our
sickness, and losses, we cry out
that God hath forgotten us, he
hath forgotten to be gracious, and
shuts up his loving kindness in dis-
pleasure. But distrust him not.

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a Mother cannot forget her Child: much less such a Father. Every tribulation which he inflicts, is but a Thorn in our sides to prick us, and awake us, because we have forgotten God.

And remember the Death of Christ, not only casting your eyes back to the large Histories of it in the Gospels, as if that would suffice: but affectingly, practically, zealously: and then every thing else will come to mind to perfect holiness. When we remember his Death, we are sure he is past Death, and Risen again, now to Die no more, and that he is Ascended into Heaven, and makes Intercession for us. We have obtained that Faith that we partake in the New Testament of his Bloud, and that our Names being found in the

216 *What Comforts flow from the 2*
Testament, we are heirs of God, &
co-heirs with Christ. The customs
of the world will teach us, that an
Heir is bound to execute the Will
of the Testator, to see every thing
perform'd that he hath charg'd and
bequeathed. Do your part like a
true Executor, with a righteous
Administration in remembrance of
him. But forgetfulness cannot
creep upon us, when there is so vi-
sible a Monument before us to
bring it often into our thoughts.
Luther says, it will help a man
more in the study of Piety, to me-
ditate profoundly upon Christ's
Passion one day, than to read over
all the *Psalms* of *David*. A bold
comparison: It will indeed ravish
the Soul with trembling, to consi-
der how much Christ loved us, by
how much he suffered for us: it
will make us look upon sin with
horror,

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honor, which begat such torment
and signominy to the innocent
Lamb of God: it will Comfort our
weak Faith; that he who hath
done so great things for us, will
not abandon us; and having subdued
our Enemies, will not let them
renew the Battel to overcome us:
it will encourage us to lay down
our life for him, who hath laid
down his life for us. *My medita-*
tion of him shall be sweet, I will be
glad in the Lord, Psalm 104. 34.
He hath drunk up the Cup of sor-
row, that I might drink of nothing
but the Cup of Salvation. This is
the Wine, *Prov. 31. 6*, which be-
ing given unto him that hath a hea-
vy heart, confutes all the objecti-
ons of Infidelity, Despair, an evil
Conscience, or whatsoever the
tempter can suggest against the
Hope of my Glorification. Says
the

218 *What Comforts flow from the*
the Son of Syrach, Chap. 49. 1.
The remembrance of Josias was sweet
as Honey in all months, and as Brea
sick at a Banquet of Wine. If the
Name of *Josias* was so precious for
restoring Religion, what melody
is there in the remembrance of
Christ's Name, what Musick in his
Banquet, which is the very Mer-
cy-feast, from whence the voice of
the Lord gives the principal
Oracles of *Consolation*.? Whose
Definition I have reserved to be
the last words of all; *Consolatio est*
conveniens Unio potentie cum Ob-
jecto, as our best Scholars have it;
Consolation is a convenient Union of
any Faculty with its Object. As
when the Eye meets with light, it
is the Comfort of the Eye. When
the Ear meets with harmony, it is
the Comfort of the Ear. What
is the most transcendent *Consolati-*
on

Sacrament of the Lords Supper. 219
on therefore, but the Union of the
Soul with God, the best Object,
in a real and most significative
manner, the Union of the Spirit
with Christ in the Sacrament of
his Holy Supper. To whom be
Praise, and Glory, and Thanksgi-
ving. *Amen.*

ERRATA.

PAge 20, line 21. read *taught us*: p. 54 l. 18.
rather: p. 59. l. 18. r. *whosoever*: p. 146.
l. 5. r. *God that*: p. 187. in the Title, read *the Sa-
crament of Baptism.*

THE END.

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